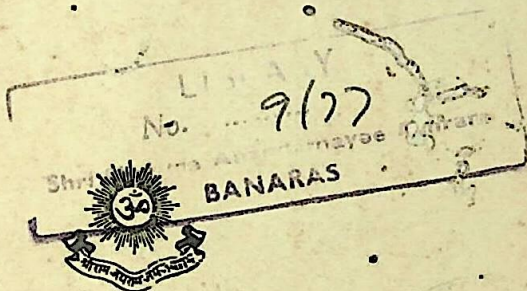


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SWAMI RAMDAS
AND
MOTHER KRISHNABAI
A Devotee's Diary



Volume V

1958

ANANDASHRAM
P. O. Anandashram, Via Kanhangad
S. INDIA

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SWAMI RADHAS:
AND
MOTHER KRISHNABAI
A Devotee's Diary

Presented to Ma
Anandamayee Ashram
Pustakalaya
Varanasi

April 1972



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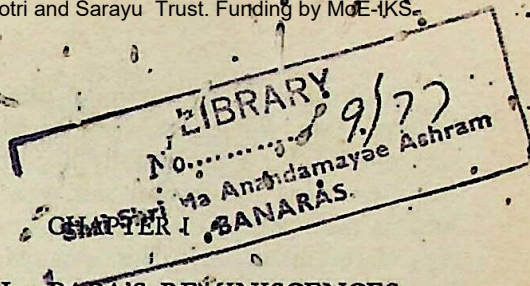
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JUNAGADH : PAPA'S REMINISCENCES

Place: Bangalore.

Sunday, 1st November, 1953.

Arrived at Bangalore, an hour late, at 8 a.m. At the Cantonment Station were waiting a large number of devotees. Papa was happy to meet P. S. G. Rao and Hanumantha Rao who had come from Madras to have his Darshan.

Sarangapani Mudaliar and others garlanded Papa and Mother. They were then taken to the residence of Sarangapani Mudaliar at 19, Race Course Road, and were received by Mrs. Mudaliar and her daughters, who waved *Kunkum* water in front of them so as to remove any evil eye that might have been cast on them during the journey. Sadhu Murugadas was waiting in the hall adjacent to the verandah, and as soon as Papa and Mataji entered the hall, Murugadas prostrated before them and ran up to join the Bhajan that was already going on upstairs.

Papa had his wash and breakfast, and sat for the Bhajan. The Bhajan came to a close at 9-30 a.m., but the devotees did not disperse till late in the afternoon. Sarangapani gave a feast to all of them on the auspicious occasion of Papa's visit to his house.

Sri Swami Hariharananda Bharati of Sri Ananta Swami Math, Bangalore, used to like Papa's company very much. Papa also equally liked his company. Papa enquired about the Swami and wanted to go and meet him in the afternoon. Papa also heard that Sri Swami Anandashram of Sri Chitrapur Math, Shirali, is in Bangalore. Papa likes to avail himself of every opportunity to have his Darshan.

Just after Papa finished his afternoon nap, he was told that Sri Swami Hariharananda had come. Papa went from his room to the hall and seated the Swamiji by his side on the chair provided. A few minutes later they were called in to take fruits. They sat together and had fruits on the same table. Again they sat in the hall. A number of devotees were sitting on the floor. When it was about 3 p.m. Swamiji wanted to go. Sri Dasappa, Minister of Finance, Mysore State, was also sitting just in front of the saints. When the Swamiji was about to get up, the whole gathering stood up.

Swami Hariharananda (*pointing to Dasappa*): "These people have caught us. There is no escape from them."

Dasappa: "Swamiji, why are you saying like this? You are all Mahatmas and we are all Grihastas. Why do you say that you have no escape from us?"

Swami Hariharananda: "But, I mean only about the body. As Atman we are free always. This *Vyavahar* is concerning the body only."

Papa (*to Swamiji*): "Swamiji, why do you say like that? Why not say that he (Dasappa) being Ram Him-

self you are right in saying that you are under his protection? When everything is Ram we are, all, of course, under His protection."

Swami Hariharananda: "Yes. If I make any mistake in talking you are bound to correct me. If we have the blessings of Mahatmas and the touch of their holy feet, everything is possible."

So saying, he bent and touched Papa's feet. Papa also got up.

Papa: "The feet of Mahatmas are like these."

Saying this, he touched Swamiji's feet.

Papa and party started at 3-30 p.m. Sarangapani Mudaliar was asked in advance to have some garlands, fruits and sweets ready.

They first went to the Bowring Hospital, to see Sarangapani Mudaliar's second son Ranganathan, who developed some serious illness the previous night and was admitted in the hospital at 1 a.m. Getting down from the car near the ward, Papa, Mataji, Sarangapani, his wife, and S. went inside the ward where Ranganathan was lying with a hypodermic needle fixed in his hand to give a continuous flow of saline to his system. After enquiring how he was feeling and so on, Papa said, "You will be all right by the time we return from Anantapur."

From the hospital they drove straight to the residence of Sri Swami Anandashram. Anandashram Swamiji is the spiritual head of the Saraswat community. His Math is at Shirali, N. Kanara. The Swamiji recently

got the present house in Bangalore also for the Math so that he can spend the hot months here. He was sitting on a sofa in a fairly big room adjacent to the verandah itself. There was another sofa on one side, facing Swamiji's right. Papa entered the room with a garland. He garlanded the great saint and prostrated before him, his head touching Swamiji's feet. When Papa got up, Swamiji asked him to take his seat on the chair provided. Mataji prostrated before the saint, touching his feet, and took her seat a few yards in front of him.

Papa and Swamiji talked for a while about each other's tour, as Swamiji is also on a tour to the North.

Swamiji then requested Papa to have some milk or fruit, but Papa excused himself saying that he could not take anything at that time.

It was time to depart. Papa got up and prostrated.

Papa: "S. wishes to photograph you. He has got a cine-camera with him. Would you mind coming outside for a short while, as it is too dark in this room?"

Swamiji consented, got up and changed his upper cloth, and in a few minutes came out with Papa, and the large group followed. S. filmed the whole party. Then Papa and those who came with him left the place.

Evening Bhajan at Sarangapani Mudaliar's house was well attended. Most of the devotees dispersed by 9-30 p.m. A few were sitting with Papa in the room.

Papa: "Ramdas must sleep early tonight. Mataji also had no rest during the day, so it is better you all retire now."

Monday, 2nd November, 1953.

7 a.m. Sarangapani Mudaliar's house. Bhajan is to start at 7-15 a.m. Papa is in his room and a few others are with him.

Papa (to C. Ramachandra Rao): "Why is Bhavanishanker Rao not to be seen at all? Does he not know that we are here?"

Ramachandra Rao: "He was not here for a long time. I am not sure if he has come back."

S: "He met Papa in Bombay last year."

Papa: "Yes, he lost his son a few months back and he and his wife were terribly grieved. Mother's sorrow on account of the death of any of her grown up children is simply unbearable.

"Bhavanishanker Rao was attached to Ramdas for many years but now he has got so much entangled in his family matters that he hardly finds time to do Bhajan or think of God."

S: "Papa, was he married when he accompanied Papa to the Himalayas?"

Papa: "He was married at that time and a great tussle was going on between him on one side and his relatives on the other."

S: "So, their will worked."

Papa: "No. Later they also gradually changed and were coming to see Ramdas.

"The devotees advise those who are in trouble that the world is after all transitory; nothing is permanent

here. Attachment to these perishable objects is the cause of all sorrow, God alone is our refuge—and so on. But if they themselves lose some of their close relations, they are very much affected; even more than those to whom they taught the transitory nature of things. Ramdas has seen many cases like this.”

S: “If asked why they are so much affected even with all their knowledge, what do they reply?”

Papa: “They keep quiet. If at all they reply they say, ‘My wife is terribly affected on account of the death and when I see her in that condition I feel for her. But for her, I may not have been affected?’

“Thus the whole blame is put on the wife. But it is to a great extent true. Men, when they are left alone, can control themselves. But women cannot. Seeing women in such a miserable plight and being often reminded of the past calamity, men also grieve.”

7-15 a.m. Papa went for the Bhajan. In the room only S. and Mataji remained. S. was writing his diary and Mataji was attending to various things in the room: washing, arranging things, etc.

S. (to Mataji): “However much I write this, I feel I have still more to write.”

Mataji: “If you say so now, how much you could have recorded if you were with Papa some years back! He, in those days, talked about nothing but God. When I met him he was like that. That was why he could place his whole mind on me. Otherwise how could I have attained Him so soon? Now he has hundred and

one thing to attend to. If it were in these days, I would not have gained so much."

S: "So, from what you say, Papa's so-called service is a disservice to real aspirants. Can it be so?"

Mataji: "Not like that. Papa did not start these activities for a long time, but he found that those who joined him for Sadhana could not devote themselves the whole time for Sadhana. So it was considered advisable to take up some activity so that they could partly devote their time for the work and the rest for devotional practices. Otherwise Papa would not have started all these institutions."

Some mothers came in to see Mataji and prostrated before her. So she turned her attention towards them for sometime, and then asked them to go for Bhajan.

She again came near S. and asked: "Do you know what I told M. before we went to see Anandashram Swamiji?"

S: "I only know that you asked P.S.G. Rao also to accompany us and sent Gajendra to get some fruits and flowers."

Mataji: "That is all?"

S: "I do not know anything more."

Mataji: "Of course, I told P. S. G. Rao that he might come with us to see the Swamiji. So he sent for some flowers and fruits. I also suggested that he might offer some money to the Swamiji because that will do him good. He asked me how much he should offer. I left it to him to decide as he thought fit."

"I had told M. also to get some sweets, fruits and garlands. I suggested that he might also offer some money to the Swamiji. He asked me how much he should offer. But I left it to him. He again asked, Rs. 50/-, Rs. 100/-, how much he should pay. I made it clear that it was left to him. Then he replied: 'I have only one Guru.' I quietly told him that he is right in saying that he has only one Guru. But that very Guru himself is coming in various forms. First we must be able to see our Guru in saints and then in all beings and creatures. He is not asked to serve and worship only Anandashram Swamiji, but all saints and all beings. That is our goal. He was, of course, convinced.

"We are not always to remain with the narrow vision that our Guru is only in one form. See how Papa himself is showing to us how we should pay due respects to other saints. He prostrates before them. Why is he doing it? Has he to gain anything more? It is for us to see and learn."

Papa started at 3-30 p.m. for some visits. First he went to the Anathalaya conducted by the Manager of the *Ashakta Poshaka Sabha*. The Secretary of the Sabha received Papa and party and took them round the new buildings that are getting ready to house the orphans. Mataji was happy to see the arrangements made to look after the orphans and enquired of the Secretary if she could send some orphans, to which the Secretary readily agreed.

The next visit was to the hospital to see a woman who was a mental patient. The patient was lying on the bed, both hands and legs tied, and talking things at

random. Papa and Mataji stood before her and when she was told by her relatives that Swami Ramdas had come, she gazed intently. She expressed in Telugu that she could not do Pranams to Papa as her hands were tied. Papa told her that it was enough if she mentally prostrated. She, however, requested Papa to place his foot on her head which he did, sitting on a chair near her. Just after this, she closed her eyes for some time and talked to herself: "Oh Narayana, how gracious are you to have brought this saint here to bless me!" But the next minute she changed and started behaving abnormally by biting her rug. Papa blessed her and assured her husband that she will be all right soon. It was told later that this woman had a dream some days ago in which she saw Papa whom she had not met before. From that time she had been worrying her husband to take her to Papa.

After getting into the car, Mataji said: "Papa, how bold were you to sit near her and place your foot on her head. I was afraid she might bite your foot."

Papa: "Ramdas did not think of it. It seems somebody who was mad was brought to Ramana Maharshi. He was asked to place his head at Maharshi's feet. But the fellow bit Maharshi's toe. After that nobody was permitted to touch his feet."

At Sarangapani Mudaliar's house. Sarangapani Mudaliar was enquiring of Mataji about the construction work of the new kitchen of which he had agreed to bear the whole cost.

Sarangapani Mudaliar: "How is the construction work going on, Mataji?"

Mataji: "The walls have been raised and the roofing work will be started soon. We have still Rs. 500/- out of the amount you had sent on that account. It is only in the account. We have used up the money for eating."

Sarangapani Mudaliar: "If money is wanted I shall send more, Mataji."

Mataji: "It is all right. We shall write to you when we have spent the balance amount also. Otherwise you might get tired of sending money. I do not want anybody to feel that way. Money is after all money, you see. It is hard to part with it. Unless one cheerfully gives it, he cannot have the benefit of giving. That is why we have stopped even taking loans from anybody. We noticed that those persons, from whom we took loans, had their minds disturbed on that account and their attitude towards us also changed. So, why should we give room for anybody's downfall? Now we are trying to manage without raising loans from devotees."

En route from Bangalore to Anantapur.

Tuesday, 3rd November, 1953.

While on travel, Mataji generally keeps for Papa a spare set of dress and an additional towel handy, so that at any time change was necessary it could be done without delay. This morning, just after the train left Bangalore, Papa got up from his seat to go to the W.C., and his towel fell on the floor. Mataji took it, folded and kept it in a handbag, and replaced it by another. In another hour, when Papa got up from his seat, that towel also fell on the floor. Mataji again took it, put it in the bag, and gave him another of a smaller size,

which she had kept for her use, as it was at hand — Papa's towels were in the suitcase. Every time a new towel was given, Papa was asking Mataji, "Why should Ramdas change the towel? It just touched the ground and you have kept it aside. What is the harm in using the same thing?"

Now the towel fell on the ground for the third time. Mataji did not notice it as she was facing the opposite side. S. laughed and was about to tell Mataji.

Papa (*laughing*): "Don't tell her, don't tell her."

By this time Mataji turned towards Papa and asked what the matter was.

S. had to say now that Papa's towel had fallen again and that he had picked it up himself.

Mataji took that towel from Papa and gave him a small handkerchief. Papa put it in his pocket.

S: "Papa, perhaps that is the punishment for dropping all the towels. You are now to manage with a kerchief."

Papa: "This is better. Ramdas can put it in the pocket and it won't fall down."

S: "That is the consolation."

Mataji: "This will do. Why should Papa have that long one? He has to put it round the neck or hold it. This small thing he can put in his pocket."

Papa: "When everything happens for good, is this also not for good?"

Mataji: "From next time I shall keep four towels outside instead of two."

S: "Papa, Mataji has very much relaxed the rigid rules of cleanliness."

Papa: "Is it so?"

Mataji: "If you all do not take to my path, I must take to your path. I find that you only go your own way. I am trying to give up mine and follow yours."

Reached Anantapur at 4-30 p.m. Satyanarayana Rao, Venkatesan, Ramachandra Rao, Rama Rao, Nagesh Rao and a few others received Papa at the platform and took the party to the residence of Satyanarayana Rao at Sarojini Street, Extension.

Place: Anantapur.

Wednesday, 4th November, 1953.

7-30 a.m. Satyanarayana Rao's house. Papa was sitting on a sofa in the room provided for his stay. A few devotees were sitting in front on the floor. Satyanarayana Rao introduced a new arrival, saying, "Papa, this friend wants to talk to Papa about the great work he has been doing."

Papa: "Come on. Sit down. What have you got to say?"

New Friend: "I have translated the *Atharvana Veda* into Telugu. I want to publish and popularise it as far as possible."

Papa: "Why do you give special preference to *Atharvana Veda*?"

New Friend: "Vedas are inspired writings of sages and they are being ignored nowadays."

Papa: "Why do you take up *Atharvana Veda* only? In fact we were advised not to study *Atharvana Veda* because it deals with the various powers, how to attain them and so on and so forth."

Janakiram (*a devotee*): "Papa, it deals with science of the advanced type, engineering and so on. This friend says that there are ways and means mentioned therein to counteract the effect of Atom Bomb and other latest weapons."

New Friend: "Swamiji, I request you to give me an hour or so to talk to the audience in your presence about this Veda."

Papa: "Ramdas cannot follow your language, Telugu. He can understand only if you speak in English."

New Friend: "I am not well up in English but shall however try. Most of the audience will not understand English."

Papa: "So you do not mind even if Ramdas does not know what you talk."

New Friend: "I do mind."

A Devotee: "Has Papa to know anything more?"

Papa: "Don't know. He knows Ramnam. That is all."

Janakiram: "Papa, let him speak in English."

Papa: "All right. So we are going to hear something about developing supernatural powers. In fact, we must know that however great the powers one may attain, they are all purely in the material plane. They have no entry into the spiritual realm. One may be able to show a lot of tricks like stopping a running train, taking different things from the air and so on and so forth, and still remain a spiritual bankrupt."

The friend then spoke for sometime on *Atharvana Veda*.

In the afternoon at 2 o'clock, Papa was ready in the hall. The time for questions and answers was from 2-10 to 3-30 p.m. Seeing mostly lawyers sitting in the hall, Papa remarked: "Most of you are lawyers sitting to hear Ramdas. Lawyers are not an inspiring audience. But they can be inspired."

Venkatesan (*a devotee*): "Papa, in the latest publication of the Ramtirtha Publishing League, your letter to them has been published as a foreword. It is a very nice appreciation of Ramtirtha. Papa has quoted Ramtirtha's utterance, 'I am God, so are you'."

Papa: "Oh, they have published that letter itself! Yes, Ramdas remembers always those words of Ramtirtha, and also what he said once to an American audience. Once he was delivering a speech to a large gathering and was referring to God as He, She and sometimes as It. This perplexed one friend who got up and asked, 'Swamiji, you are referring to God as He, She and It. Can you tell me whether God is Mr., Mrs. or Miss?' To this Ramtirtha replied, 'God is neither Mr. nor Mrs. nor Miss, but a mystery.'"

"He was a great Sannyasi. Ramdas is only a child before such Sannyasis. Ramdas has the highest regard for them. What do you think Ramdas is? He is not a Sannyasi, because the name Ramdas does not fit in for a Sannyasi. He is not a Bhakta, nor a Yogi nor a Bhogi."

One Devotee: "He is Ram."

Papa: "Long ago when Ramdas was in Junagadh (he had ochre clothes in those days), he asked somebody spontaneously where the Ram Mandir was. He found himself later in a Ram Mandir. Sannyasis do not go there. But the Mahant somehow liked Ramdas very much. He asked Ramdas, 'What is your name?' Ramdas replied, 'Ramdas.'

Mahant: 'Ha, what is this? Your name and ochre cloth do not go together. You must either put on white clothes and stay here or change your name into Ramagiri or Ramapuri or something like that and go away from here.'

"Ramdas humbly told him that the name and cloth were given to him by Ram and he was not prepared to change either till Ram commanded him to do so. Ramdas then left the place. In a few minutes Ramdas found a Sannyasi who took him to the Sannyas Ashram. Ramdas stayed there for about fifteen days. That Mahant also liked Ramdas. It is the custom in that Ashram to distribute the cash collections received from devotees to all the Sannyasis present there. Some one brought to Ramdas also his share of it and asked for his name for entering in the register. All those fifteen days they had not known his name. When Ramdas mentioned his

name, they were shocked. The Mahant said: 'How did you manage to stay here? This is meant only for Sannyasis. You say your name is Ramdas. How does it fit your robes? You must change your name.' Ramdas gave him the same reply as he did to the Mahant of Ram Mandir. The Mahant then suggested that the money might be shown in their books as given to a Sannyasi, without mentioning any name. But Ramdas told the Mahant that he did not need any money. This was another surprise to them as all others were so eager to have it.

"So, 'Swami' and 'Ramdas' together do not sound well. Ramdas never wanted to be called a Swami. Now his Gerruva cloth is gone, but 'Swami' remains. The word 'Swami' fits in well with the names 'Sivananda,' 'Vivekananda' and so on, but not with 'Ramdas.'

"Ramdas has travelled all over India and has met many saints. But he has not found any now living, who has not been bound by some Sadhana or other and is entirely free from all spiritual discipline. Ramdas is moving about like a free child without any sort of Sadhana or discipline. Looking at him (with the usual white clothes on) any one might think he has no devotion for God. Ramdas does not meditate or pray. How can one say he has faith in God?"

Papa (*to one devotee*): "You have been taking God's name all these years. Don't you feel that you are advancing on the path and that it will take you to the goal?"

Devotee: "I do feel much better than before, but there are periods of great mental depression and then I

do not know where I stand."

Papa: "If you have not found the taste of Ramnam you will have left it long ago. Regarding the moments of depression it is your own fault. When you take Ramnam in full swing, you are elated and feel happy. But when you become slack in your Sadhana, you get worried and depressed."

Papa (*to Janakiram of Penukonda*): "How is your Nama Sankirtan going on?"

Janakiram: "It is going on fine. All the devotees are very enthusiastic. Once we start, we ceaselessly repeat till we close the function. It is a source of great joy to all."

Papa: "You have electrified the whole place with Ramnam. It is said that it is not we who take the Name but the Name possesses us. Once it possesses us like that, it will never leave us. Ramdas was possessed by it and he is free like a child today."

CHAPTER II

THE GLORY OF PRASAD

Place: Anantapur.

Thursday, 5th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. Papa's urine was sent to the doctor for sugar and specific gravity test. Venkatesan, who took it to the doctor, came back.

Papa: "What is the result of the test?"

Venkatesan: "Papa, the doctor says that there is $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ sugar and the specific gravity is 1025."

Papa: "What? Ramdas never had so much any time before. It was never more than 1% in the morning and Ramdas has been very careful in his diet."

Venkatesan: "The doctor says it is pretty high and the urine was brick red. He doubts it may perhaps be due to exertion during the journey."

Papa: "Somehow Ramdas does not care much for the report of these doctors. They terrify people. Once, many years ago, a doctor examined a patient and found out that he was so bad that he ought to have died! But that man is even today quite alive and kicking."

9 p.m. After the Bhajan, most of the devotees had left the place. Only a select few were sitting with Papa in his room.

• All the devotees were called for meals in the adjoining hall. Some of them went, while a few others remained with Papa. Papa asked them also to go and have their meals. Leaves had already been spread and meals served for all of them. As soon as they sat, they started singing "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" and after a few minutes some Slokas in Telugu were sung. By this time, Papa had pulled his chair towards the entrance of the hall and was facing the devotees messing in the hall. Papa liked the Slokas sung by Appannachar very much, though he could not have understood their meaning. After singing two or three Slokas, they started eating. Finishing the meals they all joined Papa in his room.

Papa (to Appannachar): "Your Slokas are very nice. Whose composition are they?"

Nagesh Rao: "They were all composed by Appannachar himself and are the translations of Papa's poems."

Papa: "Are they? How many has he translated? They have been translated into Marathi also."

Nagesh Rao: "He has translated quite a number."

Appannachar then brought his notebook in which he had written the English originals and the translations, and read out to Papa both. While reading the second poem in English, Papa asked: "Sure? Is it written by Ramdas?"

Appannachar: "Yes, Papa."

Papa: "Ramdas does not remember at all. He cannot think he could have written this."

• Appannachar continued and read a few more and

sang his Telugu translations.

Prof. Krishna Rao: "Your poems treat of such high philosophy that it is found very hard to translate."

Appannachar: "Whenever we read a poem we are lifted up and up so high....."

Papa: "So it takes you right high up and leaves you there."

Janakiram: "And by the time we come down, another poem comes from Papa to shoot us back to the heights."

Krishna Rao: "They are very difficult to understand."

Papa: "You will see a poem published in the current issue of *The Vision*. Take that copy. Ramdas will read it out to you. It is about Divine Life."

Papa then read out the poem:—

"Life is fragrant, sweet and glorious,
Is eternal, blissful and tranquil.

Life is love that gently flows
In crystal streams luminous.

This life is Mother, everywhere revealed
In myriad forms, movements, ways.

The blue, the green, the crimson, the yellow hues
Lavish in their varied luxuriance,
And rich with untold beauties, expressed,
In verdure, heavens, earth and dawn,
Cast their mystic spell on thee.

O Mother Nature — this is all Thy play!

- A festival of light and colour, O soul, bewitches the heart.

When Mother's grace descends on thee,
Thou art lost in the splendour of Her presence
That resolves all diversity into one Supreme whole—
• The vast cosmos and beyond —
And into that Infinite in which everything is and
is not!"

Krishna Rao: "That is exactly the thing, Papa. We cannot understand, even if explained, more than what we have experienced."

Papa: "You find something good in Ramdas' poem then. Do you?"

- Nagesh: "Why is Papa asking like this?"

Papa: "No, Ramdas did not know how they are. He does not give much thought to them. He writes all these in the midst of noise and disturbance. And he does not care about the metres or syllables. Some sentences are long and some are short. Some lines are very prosaic."

Appannachar: "When the ideas are high, sometimes the language and poetic style are not up to the mark."

Papa: "A critic of poetry remarked once, referring to the work of a poet, like this: 'This is not poetry, but prose run mad.' This is exactly what Ramdas' poetry is. Are Ramdas' poems getting better or worse; how do you feel?"

- Janakiram: "They are as good as before."

Papa: "Ramdas asked because he cannot judge them himself. When he heard the old poems read out to him, he found them very good. So, he is wondering if the present ones are as good as the old poems."

Janakiram: "They are good, Papa."

Papa: "So Ramdas can boldly continue writing poems. Can he?"

Satyanarayana Rao: "Should we, poor low creatures, certify Papa's poems?"

Papa: "Low or high is no matter. When you say they are good, Ramdas feels he can boldly go on writing."

9-30 p.m. It is time for Papa to retire. The devotees left the room. Mataji and Mrs. Krishna Rao were massaging Papa.

Papa (to Mataji): "One of them has translated Ramdas' poems into Telugu. They say he has done it nicely. They are full of appreciation for Ramdas' poems. Does Ramdas write so well? He does not think that he has any ability to write, lecture, or do anything. The one thing that he is fully aware of is the bliss that he constantly has."

Mataji: "At least you say you have one thing."

Papa: "Bliss he has, and he knows well that he has it. Other talents he has not. But he is sure he is not prepared to give this bliss up even if someone is ready to give him all the worldly knowledge of writing, speaking and so on, in exchange for the bliss. This alone will do for him."

Friday, 6th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. Papa got up just after 6 a.m. Satyanarayana Rao, Krishna Rao, and a few others were in the hall writing Ramnam. As soon as the door was opened, they entered the room and prostrated before Papa. They then sat around him and continued writing Ramnam.

Krishna Rao: "Papa, this is the first thing we do—to finish the quota of Ramnam."

Papa: "In the Ashram all together write 30 to 40 thousand Ramnam daily. Mataji is also writing. She writes a very beautiful hand in Devanagari script. Lately she has not been able to write because of heavy work. There is very enthusiastic response to this Nama Likhita Japa Yajna from all parts of India. Many feel that this has come to them as a blessing, as the time wasted in gossiping so far is now best utilized for writing Ramnam."

Krishna Rao: "The peace we get while writing is simply indescribable."

Papa: "That is what many devotees write to Ramdas."

Papa's breakfast was brought and Mataji called him to partake of the same. After breakfast Papa returned and continued the talk.

Satyanarayana Rao: "Papa, Christians talk about repentance, confession and so on. Are they not all in the plane of duality?"

Papa: "Yes, it is always in the dual plane."

Venkatesan: "So, the teachings of Christ are based on dualism. Christ himself never said that he himself was God. He only declared that he and his Father in Heaven are one. Of course, Sufism transcends all these. One Sufi saint was saying 'Anal Huq' (I am God). Even when his body was cut into pieces, each piece of the body continued saying, 'Anal Huq.' Papa, one Muslim friend told me that non-vegetarianism was prescribed for people of the most uncivilized type living in places where nothing but meat was available. In these days, vegetarianism has no place."

Papa: "Was he a vegetarian himself?"

Venkatesan: "Yes, he was."

Papa: "That is the way they support their own point of view. An English lady was a pure vegetarian and had a great leaning towards non-violence. She was telling Ramdas that Christ was a pure vegetarian. But the scriptures clearly show us that he was not. She had great respect for Christ and therefore could not think of Jesus taking non-vegetarian food for which she had a contempt. So she brought him to her own level.

"Jesus or somebody has said, 'It does not matter what goes into your mouth, but what comes out of it.' It does not matter whatever food we eat, but it is of great importance what we express through our mouth. There are many strict vegetarians who have a furious temper, and filthy words come out of their mouths."

Satyanarayana Rao: "There are some devotees waiting to perform Pada-pooja."

Papa: "Oh (*jumping up from the seat*)! The

time is up. Why did you not remind him of this earlier? Let us go there."

9-45 a.m. The morning Bhajan is over. Mataji has yet to arrange Papa's bath. Papa has not been quite normal in his health since he left the Ashram on tour. So he suggested to Mataji, 'Ramdas must go for evening walk regularly. He should not miss it.'

S: "Papa, we forgot all about the evening walk after starting on the tour."

Papa: "It is better we start it now."

S: "What time? 5 to 6 p.m. may be all right."

Papa: "Yes. (to Venkatesan) Ramdas would like to take a long walk in the evening between 5 and 6."

Venkatesan: "We shall take Papa in a car to the vicinity of the tank and from there Papa can take a long walk on the road. There will be no traffic at that time."

Satyanarayana Rao: "The tank is full, Papa."

Papa: "What does it matter? Ramdas is not going to swim in it."

Venkatesan: "So, it is fixed that we go from here at 5 o'clock and, near the tank, break....."

Papa: "What to do near the tank, Bray???"

Venkatesan: "Break."

Papa: "Ramdas thought you want us to go near the tank, and bray!"

Nanjunda Sastri: "Are we to go there and break the car?"

Venkatesan: "That is fine. We do not bray or break the car. We only get down near the tank, walk for about an hour and come back."

Some devotees came for Darshan. Papa sat on his chair. The devotees, after paying their respects to him, sat before him. Those who were already in the room also sat there.

One Devotee: "Swami, many horrible things are going on in the world. How does God permit all these things?"

Papa: "The whole universe in a play of Shakti. Shakti is the dynamic aspect of Shiva. Shiva is the eternal, changeless Reality. Its dynamic aspect, Shakti, takes all the forms. That is also called Prakriti. Shakti can again be described as two. Para-shakti and Aparashakti. Para-shakti is that which is beyond all Gunas. Aparashakti is that which manifests itself as and in all Gunas."

"Ours is to surrender to Para-shakti. What do you mean by surrender? Surrender here means to know and feel that all our actions are Her actions; all our movements are Her movements. If we live our life with this attitude, our ego-sense will gradually disappear."

"In fact, all the various forms of the universe are Her forms. The whole universe is the form of the Mother, and we are not each a separate form. We all together make up the Mother's divine form. We sometimes think we are males, some others are females and so on. But when we once know all are the forms of the Mother, we see that all are females. The only male is Shiva—the Purusha. If you attain this cons-

ciousness, you will easily get over the sex idea. You will never feel you are a male, different from the other sex. You will thus feel one with the whole existence."

One Devotee: "We request Papa to kindly enlighten us as to how to get that consciousness."

Papa: "Ramnam. Ramnam is the only way."

Venkatesan: "Ramnam is the panacea for all the ills of life. Let us hoist the flag of Ramnam everywhere."

Papa: "We have a big flag in the Ashram in orange colour, with *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* embroidered on it in Hindi."

Mataji: "I am arranging for the bath and shall send for Papa in a few minutes."

Papa: "Yes."

Mataji went to the bathroom.

Papa: "Mother's will be done! Ramdas generally submits to her. But sometimes he rebels. Because if, at least sometimes, he does not rebel, he will be taken to be a very tame chap and considered good for nothing. When he asserts himself sometimes, she will know he has guts in him."

Venkatesan: "But that assertion becomes finally submission."

Papa: "Yes, invariably."

Satyanarayana Rao: "Is that assertion not *mithya*?"

Papa: "Assertion and submission, both are *mithya*. So far as the play is concerned, both are real. Beyond

that, both cease to have any reality."

Venkaṭeśan: "It is better to have the servant Bhava with the Lord. Is it not, Papa?"

Papa: "A real servant becomes a master automatically. Hanumanji was the humblest servant of Rama. See how he behaved in Lanka. He was a terror there.

"You become a servant in order to go beyond the idea of master and servant. '*Aham Brahmasmi*' is the attitude of a Jnani. 'I am a servant of God' is the attitude of one on the Bhakti path."

One Devotee: "Swamiji, I am troubled much"

Papa: "Do not trouble trouble till trouble troubles you." (Everybody including the questioner roared with laughter).

2 p.m. Time for questions and answers. Papa was ready in the hall, where a large number of women had gathered to hear him.

Papa: "Eighty percent of the audience are women!"

The talks went on for an hour.

5 p.m. Papa, followed by some devotees, left by car for an evening drive and walk on the bund of the tank, and returned a few minutes after 6 o'clock.

After the evening Bhajan, Papa came back and took his seat in the room. Janakiram's wife sat before him, holding his feet and shedding profuse tears. She was sorry that Papa did not visit her village and stay in her house for at least two days as before. Papa consoled her in many ways. Now Janakiram also came and sat by her side, rubbing Papa's feet.

• Papa (to Janakiram): "Do you find a strange glow in Ramdas' face? • Is he effusing light?"

• Hearing this, Janakiram melted away like butter and placed his head at Papa's feet.

Janakiram: "Papa, it is simply wonderful that you ask me this question now. I had a dream four or five days back, when I saw the bust of Papa effusing such a bright and powerful light of love and compassion that I was simply overpowered with joy. That experience lasted for about ten minutes. Papa is asking me now if I see a strange glow in his face. Is it not simply wonderful? In fact I do not miss Papa even for a day. Any moment I want Papa, Papa is with me to solve any problem. The answers are ready before me. So, I never feel your separation. I do not have to write to you often."

Papa: "It is well if all the devotees do likewise, as Ramdas will have his correspondence reduced to a great extent. Now he is dictating about 20 to 30 letters daily in the Ashram."

Janakiram: "I do not have to write to Papa except perhaps about some spiritual matters. Even spiritual matters are solved without resorting to correspondence."

Papa: "How Ramdas wishes he were in your place!"

Janakiram fell at Papa's feet saying: "Ah, Ramachandra! What do you say, Papa?"

• Papa: "Yes, Ramdas really feels it. In his life he missed this joy that you are getting now. He met some saints but never felt so much joy as you all feel now."

He simply sat before them and after some time left the place and never felt like doing any service. He was sitting before the saints, completely absorbed and unconcerned. Even food, somebody had to force him to take. Instead of his doing service to saints he was receiving service. The Sadhus were very kind to him and they looked after him very lovingly and tenderly. Thus you will find that he missed the sort of joy and ecstasy that you are now experiencing."

Janakiram was simply moved to tears and was intently gazing at Papa.

Papa: "Yes, Ramdas does feel he is sometimes radiating a strange and powerful light from his face. It is more when he is in a state of high ecstasy."

Saturday, 7th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. 12-30 noon. Papa was taking rest. In the adjoining room Mataji and S. were sitting together. They were cutting some fruits and getting them ready for Papa, before he got up.

Mataji: "J.'s wife wanted to talk to me. She was waiting for a chance when I was free. Yesterday afternoon when Papa had gone for the talks at 2 o'clock, I called her in to hear what she wanted to say. She narrated a lot of her family worries, financial difficulties and the unworldly nature of her husband. She says J. would bring money and hand it over to her and would not care to see how things are managed. I told her that such a husband has to be looked after with all love and care."

"She wanted to touch my leg and hands, but I

was feeling so uncomfortable in her presence that I wished she had better left me alone. The moment she was about to touch me, I was shuddering within myself. I was also wondering why I had such a reaction. Again in the night she came as soon as I was about to close the door to rest for some time. I did not want her to come in, but she did so, all the same. She went on speaking about her husband, how a number of people are coming there, how she finds it difficult to serve them and so on. Finally she said that she feels very close to me and once saw me in everything for a few minutes. She added that she thinks of me often and wishes to be with me as she feels deeply attached to me.

"Then I understood why I was feeling a repulsion for her. I have an inward repulsion towards anybody who attaches himself or herself to me, leaving Papa aside. In this case I did not know about it until she told me. But my repulsion for her had started before I knew of it."

S: "When they love you so much, is it proper on your part to maintain a repulsive attitude towards them?"

Mataji: "Such an attitude of mine will not do them harm. It will only help them to take their mind off me and place it on Papa. That will give them salvation. By merely depending upon me they will get nothing."

S: "Why should they not?"

Mataji: "Because I had been wishing like that for many years. There used to be questions and answers

within myself during my Sadhana days. The question was whether I should become a Guru like Papa. The questioner was Papa himself from within. My answer to that question was that I should never be a teacher but only a devotee all my life in the service of Papa. Many times I took Papa severely to task mentally for putting such fantastic questions to me. At present I do not wish or express anything of that type. My previous Sankalpa works. Nobody can get spiritual benefit from me direct. They must approach Papa. If they cling on to me knowing that Papa and I are one, then it is all right."

S: "Then what do you think J.'s wife is doing? What is her attitude?"

Mataji: "I don't know."

S: "Do you think she clings only to your one form and that is why you have a repulsion for her?"

Mataji: "Most probably so. Suppose she loves me with a broader mind and sees me in all, as she said, then she must automatically love all. Such a big heart is not seen in her. So her attachment seems to be purely to my physical form."

S: "Mother, you were telling something about Prasad this morning? What was it?"

Mataji: "Yes, I remember that. When S.M. with his wife and children was returning to his place this morning, I gave him some fruits as Prasad. He immediately said he did not want them. But on second thought he took them from me. The moment he said he did not want them, I felt sore about it as it is very

had to refuse Prasad. He does not yet know the value of Prasad.

"I still remember what he did when he took us in his car to Kasaragod. He left us at the Railway Station. D. had brought some mangoes from the Ashram and he lovingly offered him two or three mangoes, but he said that he did not want to take them as he was always eating Prasad. When D. forced on him a few, he took them and passed them on to the railway porter standing on the platform. I was very sorry for this behaviour of his. Within a short time he got some trouble in his tongue and it became so serious that he could not eat anything for some days. In those days he had contempt for those who were taking Prasad from us. He used to laugh at them. Now his attitude has much changed. He has climbed down to a great extent."

S: "When he did not take the Prasad offered to him, why did you feel that he did so in an arrogant or insulting attitude? He might have done it with a pure heart and meant what he said, that he was always eating Papa's Prasad only."

Mataji: "It was very clear from his face. Because of my faith and my having known its effects, I felt he ought not have treated it that way."

S: "Suppose one has absolutely no faith in it, what would you then say?"

Mataji: "Faith or no faith, the effect of the Prasad is there when one takes it. It is like putting your hand on fire; whether you have faith or not, the hand will be burnt. There is a story in the Gospel of Ramakrishna or somewhere, I was told, that even a dog which ate the

excreta of a saint got a better birth in the next life. Even the excreta that comes out of a saint's body works such wonders; then what about the Prasad when taken by human beings? If it is taken with all love and faith its effect will, of course, be marvellous.

"One should never refuse Prasad when offered. The other day when we all went to see Sri Anandashram Swamiji, you saw me asking for some fruits as Prasad. I kept the fruits safe, washed them, cut them and gave them to Papa. After finishing the fruits Papa asked me: 'Where are the fruits that we got from Swamiji?' I, of course, explained to him that they were the very fruits that he took just then. He himself is giving so much importance to Prasad."

S: "When you mention this I remember one incident. When Papa went to Ramana Maharshi, he gave him some Prasad. But Papa, instead of eating it, gave it to the dog that was standing near. According to you it amounted to insult."

Mataji: "He was on a vow of saltless diet."

S: "That should not have made him refuse Prasad. Prasad is above all such restrictions."

Mataji: "As I have already told you, in Papa's case it was different. His Sadhana was so intense that he never depended upon any external help. He could stand alone like that, but not any of us."

S: "I pointed out this instance because you said even Papa is anxious to take Prasad."

Mataji: "Papa did not have to take it. But he took it now to show us all the importance of it."

CHAPTER III

HOW SURRENDER IS ATTAINED

Place : Anantapur.

Saturday, 7th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. 9 p.m. The devotees, who were sitting round Papa, got up and left the room. The bed was being made for Papa by S., and three other devotees were trying to help him. Noticing that four people were preparing his bed, Papa remarked to Nanjunda Sastri who was standing by his side: "How big Ramdas has become! Four people to make his bed! Even the Rajas and Maharajas may not have four people to make their bed."

Sastri: "Two of them are graduates and one is an engineer."

Papa: "Oh, two graduates, one engineer and one Sannyasi. Ramdas has really become very great. There is no doubt about it."

Mataji who was in the adjacent room was overhearing all this. She now peeped in and asked Papa, "Since when?"

Papa: "Ramdas knows of it just now."

Papa went to bed. Mataji and Krishna Rao's wife massaged Papa. Krishna Rao, Satyanarayana Rao,

Sastri and S. were sitting near the cot.

Satyanarayana Rao: "Papa, you were quite right when you said that Mataji is a better orator than yourself. She gave us a lecture this evening. It was simply marvellous. She was vehement and hitting."

Papa: "What was she talking about?"

Satyanarayana Rao: "The main point she touched was the question as to how many of us who say we are devotees of Papa are really desirous to have his grace?"

Papa: "That is her favourite subject."

Mataji (*in Konkani*): "I did not wish to talk all that, but was dragged into it. I asked them, while they talk so much about service, what is it that they exactly do. They may think, on seeing Papa, to give a donation of Rs. 100/-. When they put their hand in the purse, only a rupee comes out. After taking it out they look up to the sky and down to the earth, and finally decide not to give anything. That is their heart for service. That is the only way I can talk."

Papa: "Mataji was telling Ramdas a gist of what she told you."

Mataji: "I do not know how to talk beautifully and in a pleasing way. Papa does it very nicely. He talks indirectly and the person concerned has only to take the cap if it fits him. But I directly hit those concerned."

Papa: "When Ramdas speaks, he does not look at the person about whom he is talking, but looks at another. The person concerned may know that it is aimed at him and, if the cap fits him, may put it off."

Sometimes every one thinks it is aimed at the other and nobody takes it. But Mataji's way is to use force and give a straight injection and there ends the matter. Mataji was something like a fire."

Krishna Rao: "Why 'was'? She is a fire."

Papa: "In the Ashram she goes on lecturing when she gets angry. It may be in any language, that does not matter. Ramdas cannot talk like her. In the early days her main attack was on Ramdas, and Ramdas also was a fiery fellow."

S: "After having heated arguments, it seems, Papa used to run away to the hillock at night and spend the night there."

Papa: "Yes, she was a terror in those days and Ramdas used to run away. But now he won't do it. He cannot sleep on thorns and stones, and in chill weather. Further, he is submissive nowadays."

S: "By getting angry, her head gets heated. Anybody who is unfortunate enough to go and talk to her at that time will get from her a good share of scolding. Last year, one day Mataji was very angry with the workers in the Ashram kitchen and she had given them a bit of her mind—not a small bit, but a fairly large bit. Just at that time, Chandrakalaben, wife of Natverlal Parikh of Bombay, (both of whom were staying in the Ashram for a few days), came to Mataji and returned a few vegetables that were sent to her in the morning from the kitchen. Seeing her returning the vegetables, Mataji flung some strong words at her. Noticing that Mataji was not in her normal temper, Chandrakalaben

quietly asked Mataji, 'May I bring the oil bottle and apply some oil on your head?' This question itself cooled down Mataji and she agreed to have some oil for her head." (All had a hearty laugh in which Mataji also joined).

Sunday, 8th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. 8-30 a.m. Papa, Mataji and other devotees left for the new building of the Homeopathic Association. The Association had the foundation stone for the building laid by Papa in February 1951, when Papa was there. As the building is ready now, they considered themselves fortunate to have Papa to perform the opening ceremony as well. After the short function, Papa and party returned.

It was very late when Mataji, S., Krishna Rao, and Satyanarayana Rao sat for meals. Krishna Rao, who came from Gulbarga for the occasion, was to return that evening and was therefore anxious to dine with Mataji.

Krishna Rao (*to Mataji*): "I was telling Papa that I was given the Ram Mantra on the Ram Navami day in 1943. Now it is ten years; and what progress have we made after all?"

Mataji: "What did Papa say?"

Krishna Rao: "Papa said that we should not think there is no progress at all. The progress is there. Realisation is not a thing to be attained in a day. We must have the necessary preparation to receive the final touch. It cannot be done all of a sudden. The Guru is looking after our progress, and so on."

Mataji: "Were you satisfied with the answer?"

Krishna Rao: "Yes. Very well."

An hour or two after dinner, Mataji and S. were alone in the room.

Mataji: "Did you hear what Krishna Rao said about Papa's reply?"

S: "I heard him."

Mataji: "After hearing him, I was thinking within myself why I should have talked to Satyanarayana Rao and Laxmi Devi in that strain as I did yesterday."

S: "Do you mean to say that what you talked yesterday would appear to contradict what Papa told them?"

Mataji: "Superficially they appear contradictory. But one has to think deep and understand what we both mean."

S: "There is no contradiction if we understand them."

Mataji: "But, for those who do not carefully study them, these apparently contradictory statements will prove disturbing. That is why I was not in the habit of talking about spiritual subjects to anybody. I would talk only about work and other general matters and was strictly avoiding spiritual topics. Nowadays, however, when you ask questions, I talk to you. I talk to some others also, but generally I direct all to Papa for spiritual instructions."

2 p.m. Time for questions and answers. The hall was full. A boy came to Papa with a Ramnam book and a fountain pen for getting Papa's signature on the

book. Papa took both from him and signed. While returning the pen, he noticed that the pen was badly leaking and there were ink-stains on his fingers.

Papa: "Ramdas has plenty of ink on his fingers."

Satyanarayana Rao got up and rubbed the fingers with his towel. But the stains wouldn't go. He then went inside and got a cup of water and a basin. Papa washed his fingers, but the stains did not completely disappear.

Papa: "Let the mark remain there."

One Devotee: "It is just like the Vasanas that leave a mark even after they are washed off."

Papa: "Vasanas may be driven out of the mind. But they persist in the body. One whose mind is free from Vasanas is said to have Manosiddhi; one whose body is free from Vasanas is said to have Kayasiddhi. One who has Kayasiddhi is said to have completely eradicated all his Vasanas both from his mind and body. That is perfection in Yoga. Some Jnanis stop at eradicating the Vasanas from the mind and do not care about their ejection from the body. But there are some Siddhas who have perfected the body also. By so doing, they say they are divinising the body. They make the light of the Atman permeate the body to such an extent that every particle of the body is made holy and shines with the divine radiance."

Devotee: "Will such a body die?"

Papa: "It may die, but the man will be entirely free from all Vasanas even on his physical plane."

Devotee: "Is Sri Aurobindo's Yoga the same?"

Papa: "Something like that. But he claimed that the body can be made immortal, drawing its sustenance from the cosmic energy, so that it can live on for ever. Here you will have no need for food or water and will not have to attend the calls of nature. Every particle of your body becomes a vehicle of divine power, every movement of your body is a movement of bliss."

Devotee: "Is your Sri Ram different from Dasaratha Ram?"

Papa: "Ramdas will answer you in Kabir's words. He was also put the same question. He said, 'My Ram is the great Truth, Impersonal, dwelling in the hearts of all beings and creatures in the universe. My Ram is the all-pervading, immanent and all-transcendent Reality. My Ram has assumed the forms of all beings and things and my Ram is Dasaratha's son also. My Ram is the all-inclusive and all-transcendent Supreme Godhead.'"

Devotee: "By saying so, you mean to say that Dasaratha Ram and other manifestations are same to you?"

Papa: "Yes."

Devotee: "Then, how is Ram considered as an Avatar?"

Papa: "Though God manifests Himself in all beings, the intensity of the manifestation differs—in some it is more, in some others it is less. There are some big waves and also small waves in the ocean. Big or small, both are forms of the same water."

Devotee: "Hanuman did not agree with this view. He declared that his Rama was the Supreme Godhead."

Papa: "Hanuman also said that as Atman he and Rama are one; as body, he was the servant or Das of Rama."

Devotee: "In the idea of oneness, can there be Dasabhava? Are they not contradicting each other?"

Papa: "It appears contradicting, but it is possible."

Devotee: "That attitude may be purely based on faith or belief."

Papa: "Belief cannot be applied to the highest Truth. Intellect and heart cannot reach there."

Devotee: "Swami, how can grace work when the law of Karma is in force?"

Papa: "Ah, that is the point which Ramdas wanted to explain sometime ago. If Karma theory is all in all, grace has no part to play in your life and everything will have to happen as determined by Karma. God has nothing to do in the shaping of your life. As in Buddha's teachings, God is severely kept out of your life and you have to work out your own destiny. By doing good acts you get good results, by bad acts bad results. The cycle goes on and on and God has no place in your life. It is by living a righteous life alone you evolve. But if you take God as a force that aids you in your spiritual evolution, then you need His grace. You do bad actions and consequently suffer. Again you do bad actions and again suffer. There must be some force active in you that must help you in your upward progress. Left to yourselves, you may be doing the same wrong action over and over again and go on suffering as a result of it. Some great power within you must

turn you from the wrong path, and that power comes to you when you pray to the Divine for rescue. That is grace. Your mind is turned to the right path by this grace.

"A devotee has composed a beautiful song, 'Oh God, are you a dealer in goods? You say if we only do Japa and Tapa for long years you will give us Darshan. If we labour hard for your realisation and get it, this is not grace. Then your Darshan is the wage we get for our hard toil. Do you call it grace? It is then our right to claim your Darshan after having done Sadhana. If you are really gracious, you must raise and save me without my doing any Sadhana. Then I won't call it a barter or bargain and you a shopkeeper.'

"So grace comes only when we know we can do nothing to attain Him, but leave all things to Him by utter surrender. In fact by His grace alone we repeat His name and do Sadhana to have Him. The moment our mind is turned towards Him we may be sure that grace has come to us. This happens by the company of a saint. Many who are living a life fully immersed in the worldly enjoyments are suddenly awakened to the higher life. Surely this awakening takes place by the contact of a great soul, a saint, whose life is transformed by grace. Karma by itself cannot liberate us."

Devotee: "If there is grace, why should it not liberate us immediately. Why should we have to take to all these difficult paths?"

Papa: "In the ultimate analysis Ramdas can say the Sadhaka is He, the Saddhya is He. He is having a play of 'hide and seek.' He is seeking Himself, and

even though He can discover Himself at once, He purposely delays. Suppose some children play the game of 'hide and seek'. The one who tries to find out the one in hiding, though he knows where he is, pretends that he does not know, searches in places where he is not and prolongs the game, and at last comes to the place where the other is and acclaims he has found him. Such is the play between the devotee and God—who are after all one and the same."

Devotee: "Papa, you say that the path of surrender is the easiest. I say it is the most difficult."

Papa: "Through utter love for God, we can attain the state of surrender. Love is not to be learnt by taking lessons about it. It is in our nature from childhood. As children we first love our mother, later we love so many other objects of the world. The only thing we have to do is to make God the object of our love."

Devotee: "That is the most difficult thing to do."

Papa: "That is truly the easiest path. All other paths are hard and difficult. By constant repetition of His name you can love Him and finally surrender to Him."

Devotee: "When I repeat Ramnam, I remember Rama as the one who was weeping for Sita, or as the one who killed Bali, and it does not produce any good effect on me."

Papa: "Do not have such ideas. Ram is at the same time the highest Truth — all-pervading, all-loving and all-merciful. When Ramdas repeated Ramnam he found it to be very effective."

Devotee: "When I repeat the Name what should I think as the object of the Name; what form?"

Papa: "No form is necessary. You may concentrate on the sound and see that in a short time your mind becomes fully concentrated and still."

Devotee: "There must be some object for the Name."

Papa: "The Name itself is the object. If you repeat OM, what object can you bring before the mind? OM is the absolute Truth. So the Name also is He. Name is God."

Devotee: "There is no mention of Ramnam in the earlier Upanishads. And if it is the name of Dasaratha Rama, then he is also not considered as the Supreme Being by many. How can we then consider that Ramnam is all-powerful?"

Papa: "Don't you know that Valmiki himself repeated Ramnam?"

Devotee: "There are instances mentioned to say that the Valmiki never led a bad life whereas it is generally said that he was a *Kinnara*. If he was a *Kinnara*, he would have made some reference to that in the Ramayana. But he has not. And it is also said Ramayana was written before Dasaratha Rama was born. It was a story from the pure imagination of the poet-saint."

Papa: "Whatever the Puranas may say, and whoever may have written the story, Ramdas can vouch that Ramnam has the power to take one to the peak of spiritual experience. Ramdas himself repeated Ramnam and

concentrated his mind upon it. He considered Ramnam as the symbol of the highest Truth and it has taken him to It. Ramdas speaks with authority because he has experienced its wonderful power. You must have faith in the power of the Name.

"You can test for yourself how it acts upon your Vasanas and how it gradually eradicates them completely. Even a serpent that is moving about with its raised hood, however violent it may be, as soon as the snake-charmer plays on his pipe, it lowers its hood and becomes very quiet. So also, when your mind listens to Ramnam, it acts like a snake-charmer's pipe on the cobra of your mind. The mind becomes calm and quiet. Ultimately all Vasanas are completely rooted out."

Monday, 9th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. 10-30 a.m. Two devotees of Hindupur were sitting in front of Papa holding his feet. One of them is a veterinary doctor, Sitaram Sastry, and the other a merchant. Sitaram Sastry appeared to have been completely overcome by emotion. He had tears flowing down his cheeks. As it was time for Papa's shave and bath, S. went to him with the purpose of calling him to the adjoining room for his shave. But seeing Papa talking very lovingly and seriously to the veterinary doctor, keeping the right hand on his back and the left hand on the other devotee sitting on Papa's left, S. did not feel like disturbing Papa, but stood motionless near him, hearing the holy conversation.

Papa: "Don't be dissipated. Give yourself up entirely to Him and once for all be free. Have no doubts or misgivings. The Divine is within you. Think of

Him constantly. Don't be subject to dejection and depression. Intensify your Sadhana. Then alone you can withstand the temptations of the world. When you are down-hearted, think of Ramdas' smiling face and you will immediately be elevated. When Ramdas was doing Sadhana he had none to give him advice like this. He had to look out for himself. He had to face all the obstacles to Sadhana and overcome them by the grace of God within. Mostly he was then in solitudes. Whenever he had an occasion to have Darshan of a saint, he simply prostrated before him and sat silently in front of him. He felt the saint was inwardly directing him to go to solitude. And he liked it too.

"The Vasanas do not leave us suddenly. Divine power, when it acts in us, can alone completely destroy Vasanas. They are like the six heads of the serpent Kaliya. The heads are *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada* and *Matsarya*. This serpent can be subdued only by Krishna—the Supreme Being. When light comes, darkness disappears. So, when the Divine reveals Himself in you, all the Vasanas automatically disappear.

"In the state of our ignorance we are subject to the three Gunas. When we realise God, we transcend these Gunas. These Gunas — Sattwa, Rajas, and Tamas — transform themselves into Sat, Chit, and Ananda. Thereafter, instead of remaining in the three Gunas you will remain in Sat-Chit-Ananda."

Looking at S. standing there for sometime, Papa asked if bath was ready.

S: "Papa is to have a shave today."

Papa: "Ah, Ramdas forgot all about it."

Papa then got up and came to the adjoining room to have his shave.

Papa: "The water is cold."

S: "I had kept it very hot. I came to call you there. But you were engaged in a serious talk. I did not like to disturb you, but stood there quietly listening to your talk. In the meantime the water became cold. I shall bring hot water again."

Mataji: "I was wondering why S., who went to call you, did not return so long."

Papa: "Ramdas saw S. standing. But he did not feel like breaking the conversation half-way."

CHAPTER IV

KUNTI DEV'S ATTITUDE

Place: Anantapur.

Monday, 9th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. 2 p.m. Questions and answers.

A Devotee: "It is said in the Bhagavad Gita that even if the senses are kept under control by starving them, the desire for the sense enjoyment still persists and will disappear only after the realisation of the Supreme."

Papa: "Is it physical fasting or fasting of the senses? Even physical fasting helps to a great extent in controlling the senses. Fasting makes the senses weak. That is the best time for meditation. Mere fasting will not help you in destroying the sense-desires. Fasting must be accompanied by deep meditation.

"Ramdas used to fast. But his fasts were, in a sense, feasts. Whenever Ram commanded him to go on fast, he felt very jubilant as if he was going to have a feast. During the fast he was in a state of bliss, as his mind used to lose itself in the Divine. At that time, repetition of the Name would stop and he used to be in a state of ecstasy. He was never troubled with hunger for food while fasting.

"All cannot fast in this way. Some people, while fasting, instead of remembering God, remember food. The thought of *Laddus* and other sweets will be revolving in their minds. It is because they have not yet experienced the taste of the divine sweetness within them. If they once taste it, even though for a short time, they will never divert their minds towards sense-objects."

Devotee: "Why not Swamiji bless us with that bliss at least for one moment, so that our minds may always be attuned with it?"

Papa: "It is for that very purpose that Ramdas has come here. Those who are ready and prepared to receive it shall certainly have it."

"The joy that you get in the company of saints is not the joy that the saint gives you but that which manifests from within you. In the presence of the saint, the flood-gates of joy within you open out and you seem to swim in it. You have noticed the lotus buds blossoming beautifully, giving out all their fragrance, at the dawning of the sun. The sun is only an ostensible cause for the buds to flower. Nothing new, that was not already inherent in the bud, came out. So also, in the presence of saints, the hidden joy within you reveals itself. This is not the case with all the people who come near the saint. Those who are ready can alone derive benefit when they contact a saint. You are all lotuses."

Devotee: "Why should we not remain in that joy for ever?"

Papa: "Why don't you allow the bud to grow and open out before the sun?"

Devotee: "Is it not a fact that only heroes can walk on the path of renunciation?"

Papa: "The path is meant only for heroes and not for cowards, as a saint says."

Devotee: "How can a man who is stricken with poverty become courageous enough to walk on the path?"

Papa: "Poverty is a blessing to him on the path. Some voluntarily accept poverty. They reduce themselves to that state, because they can thereby realise God quicker. The badge of all saints and sages is poverty."

Devotee: "Poverty makes people bad."

Papa: "Wealth makes them worse."

Devotee: "Can't poverty be eliminated from the State by a proper Government?"

Papa: "Government are doing so, by levying more taxes from the rich, such as income-tax, estate duty, death duty and so on. Wealth in the country will, in course of time, be equally distributed."

Devotee: "Why is Swamiji not advising Maharajas to distribute their wealth to the poor?"

Papa: "The Maharajas whom Ramdas met have been losing gradually everything they possessed. They have lost their power and position, and get on with the allowance paid by the Central Government. Many of them have actually become poor. Ramdas' business is only to make everybody spiritually rich."

Devotee: "How far is man free to act and how

does the law of Karma affect him?"

Papa: "Man is responsible for his actions so long as he has the ego-sense in him. As soon as he is free from the ego-sense, God starts acting in him. As long as he thinks he is responsible for his actions, he is in the clutches of Karma. He has to move in that vicious circle of good and bad actions and reap the results."

Devotee: "Swamiji, Sri Ramakrishna suffered from cancer and Sri Ramana from sarcoma. Why should they have suffered like that?"

Papa: "Ramakrishna was asked this question. He replied that he took over the *prarabdhas* of those who came and prostrated before him. He took upon himself their diseases and Karmic effects and relieved them of their suffering. That is the only reason why they should have to suffer. This is called vicarious suffering. This sort of suffering goes on even in regard to ordinary men. Suppose a man is suffering on account of extreme poverty. Another, a rich man, takes pity on him and gives his all to him. Thereby he himself suffers in order to relieve the other from suffering."

Devotee: "How is it possible to take the suffering from others?"

Papa: "Saints know the way. What happens, they only know."

Devotee: "Most of us are very anxious to transfer our troubles but there are none to take over."

Papa: "It is a very convenient idea. But very often we say we give, but do not give. There must be power

on the other side to receive and also power on our side to give."

Devotee: "Should we pray to God for material things? Does He not know what He has to give us?"

Papa: "One devotee prayed like this and Ramdas thinks that it is the best form of prayer. He said, 'Oh God, I am foolish. You are wise. I ask unwisely for so many things. Kindly do not grant them. Give me what is best in your view. In my foolishness I may ask for things which, if granted, may bring harm to me.'"

"Kunti Devi prayed to Lord Krishna to give her more and more difficulties, as then only she would remember Him. But what do we do? When difficulties come, we find fault with God. We ask Him, 'I have been so long taking your Name. What is the meaning of your bringing difficulties to me?' And then we stop taking the Name altogether. This is not the way the devotees should behave. If they change their attitude, they can turn the very difficulties into help on their path."

"There was a devotee who was for thirty years repeating Ramnam. He lost one of his children. He was overpowered with so much grief that he gave up Ramnam altogether and started abusing God for having taken away his child, even though he had been His devotee for so many years. He became very restless. Thus he spent some days in grief. His friends advised him to go to Ramdas. He knew that Ramdas would ask him to take to Ramnam, which he did not want to. Finally he did come to Ramdas. Ramdas told him, 'When your mind is not at rest, the only way to make it calm is to think of God. What will happen to you if

you go on like this without taking His name, but abusing Him? God is absolute peace and bliss. To think of Him means to rest in peace. And you are yourself blocking the way to that peace, because your child passed away. Had you brought the child with you when you came into the world? Are you going to take it with you when you depart this life? Why do you then go mad like this at the loss of it?" Ramdas allowed these thoughts to sink in his mind. In another fifteen minutes he started singing God's name, became cheerful, went back home, reopened his business and spent a happy life thereafter."

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Papa's programmes are very tight; they come one after another in quick succession, and devotees are pouring in at all hours of the day, till late in the night. Seeing this, Janakiram remarked, "Papa, to be a Mahatma is no small job. There is no end to our trying his patience. How do we bother you!"

Papa: "Sadhuism is not a joke. Ramdas does not consider such a life serious. He takes it very light. If he took it serious he would not be what he is."

4 p.m. Before coming to Anantapur, Papa had decided not to visit houses or go to any other nearby village. All the devotees were accordingly informed.

The Municipal Chairman has been sending his car for Papa's use from the day of Papa's arrival here. Yesterday, a friend brought a request from the Chairman that he wanted Papa to visit his house and wished to know if Papa would kindly make an exception in his case.

When the matter came before Papa, he said: "Ramdas cannot make an exception. He has been telling all devotees that he won't go to anybody's house. If he breaks the rule in this case, it will cause great distress to other devotees. Ramdas is not prepared to disappoint hundreds of people just to satisfy one. Please therefore request him to excuse Ramdas."

Tuesday, 10th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. 7 a.m. The Municipal Chairman, who wanted Papa to go to his house, now came with his family and performed Papa's Pada-pooja. From 7 to 8-15 a.m. there were Pada-poojas by a number of devotees, mostly performed in the orthodox style. Some of them placed their offerings in coins at Papa's feet. Later they were taken and handed over to Papa who put them in his waistcoat pocket on both sides. Consequently the pockets had become heavy. Pooja over, Papa got up and went to the small room where coffee was kept ready for him.

On getting up, feeling his heavy pockets, Papa remarked: "Ramdas is heavy on both sides."

S: "Are the sides balancing, Papa?"

Papa: "They have been made to balance. Now let the money come out. Take Ramdas' purse and the bag. Ramdas has been going about like John Gilpin who hung two wine bottles, on either side, to his belt."

10-30 a.m. A few devotees were sitting with Papa. One of them is working in Kurnool, the capital of Andhra. He was talking to Papa about the new capital and the scorpions that infested the place.

Papa (*to the Kurnool devotee*): "Do you go to see our friend R.R. there?"

Devotee: "Yes, he is there. When your programme was known to me I went to see him to tell him that I was coming to see you. But I was terribly disappointed. I felt I ought not have gone at all to see him."

Papa: "What was the matter?"

Devotee: "He is somehow against saints now. He was asking me, 'Why should you go and worship Ramdas? God alone is the one we should worship. These people are all on the way still. I do not like to worship these people. I am not permitting anybody to worship me. I do not like thousands of people following me.' These were the words I heard from him."

Papa: "Oh, has he advanced so much?"

Devotee: "At last he told me that I should not mention his name to Papa."

S: "You may tell him when you meet him next that Papa himself enquired of him."

Papa: "We cannot build up a spiritual structure on the foundation of abusing saints. By such abuse we do not do good to ourselves, but we pull ourselves down."

"Many years ago when R.R. came to the Ashram, he asked Ramdas whether he could continue his legal practice and still progress on the spiritual path. Ramdas frankly told him, if one has to resort to telling lies in whatever profession he may be, he cannot advance on the spiritual path. But R.R. was of the opinion that without telling lies he could not practise as a lawyer. Ramdas

finally told him that whether he could practise or not, if he wanted spiritual advancement he must stop telling lies. After he returned to his place, Ramdas heard that he had discontinued his practice as a lawyer and had taken seriously to spiritual Sadhana. He had no children then. But recently we heard that a son was born to him."

S: "Did he fall out with any saint? Had he any trouble with saints?"

Papa: "He had a very bad experience with Swami Nityananda. As soon as he went near him, Nityananda gave him a hard blow on the knee-cap by flinging at him a stone or a cocoanut and it appears he was in bed for some days on that account. But that may not be the reason for his present attitude."

In the evening at 4-30, Papa visited the Sai Baba High School, where the students were seated in perfect order. Papa sat on a raised and decorated platform. Papa spent about half an hour there, while some girl students sang devotional songs and the correspondent, Sri Adinarayana Rao, made a short speech. Before he started to speak, he requested Papa to address the students but Papa excused himself. From the school, Papa started direct for his usual evening walk.

Crowds began gathering at the residence of Satyanarayana Rao right from 5 p.m. for the Bhajan which was to start only at 6-30. By that time there was quite a good crowd in the Pandal erected for the Bhajan. Later the Pandal had overflowed, and the whole compound was full of people and there was also not an inch of space inside the house. The Bhajan which was started

could not be orderly owing to the unruly crowd. To add to the confusion, in the middle of the Bhajan, the electric lights went off and all had to sit in the darkness for some time.

In spite of the thick crowd, the disorder and the noise that ensued, and even when the lights were off, Papa was sitting with his usual serenity and smile and was cutting jokes as usual.

The electric line was set right and the Bhajan resumed but the noise from the crowd continued. So the convener friends requested the devotees assembled there to prostrate before Papa and leave the place. It took more than 45 minutes for all of them to prostrate and disperse.

When the lights went off, Mataji was in her room and a large number of women were crowding around her. Many had their children with them, who began to cry in that great rush. Not caring for the children, the women were only anxious to prostrate before Mataji. Seeing the situation, Mataji went out of the room to the verandah and stood there so as to avoid congestion.

The whole programme was over by 9 p.m. Papa had been sitting at a stretch for 2½ hours. When Papa came to his room, S. asked him how he managed to sit so long continuously.

Papa: "Ramdas had to."

Venkatesan: "Tomorrow we cannot have this privilege."

Papa: "If Ramdas sits for such long programmes,

his body will be shattered. If you cannot have the privilege tomorrow, Bangalore people will have it. If, due to overstrain, Ramdas falls ill, nobody will have the privilege. What a rush it was!"

Papa wanted to lie down soon. As he was having a touch of cold, K. R. Rama Rao was sent for to get some homeopathic remedies.

From Anantapur en route to Bangalore.

Wednesday, 11th November, 1953.

Satyanarayana Rao's house. Papa is to leave Anantapur today for Bangalore. From early morning devotees were pouring in for Darshan. The party was ready at 10 o'clock to start. Everybody present had a heavy heart at the prospect of Papa's departure. As the time was nearing, the pressure of grief on their hearts seemed to be increasing. Their eyes were filled with tears and words could not find their way out of their choked throats.

Papa: "Ramdas also feels like weeping when he sees you all so much moved."

Rama Rao: "Is Papa also moved?"

Papa: "Why should he not be moved? Is he a rock? You people are capable of even melting rocks."

News came that the train would arrive late by one hour.

Papa then told the devotees: "Now you can sit at ease. We are here for an hour more."

All the same the inevitable leave-taking hour came

and Papa left the house at 11-15 a.m. The train left Anantapur a few minutes before 12 noon.

As there were already three passengers in the compartment, Papa had not sufficient space for his afternoon rest.

S: "Papa can sleep on the lower berth itself. I shall request that gentleman to occupy the other seat and make space for Papa."

Papa: "No, Ramdas may not sleep. Let that friend sit where he is."

Mataji: "Why not on the upper berth, Papa?"

S: "Papa may find it difficult to climb up."

Papa: "No, Ramdas won't mind it. He can climb up."

Then S. spread Papa's bed on the upper berth and Papa climbed up, not without some difficulty, and sat on his bed. With a triumphant smile he said: "See how Ramdas managed to climb up."

He had hardly slept for fifteen minutes when the train reached Dharmavaram Station. Papa was not known to many in Dharmavaram. But the news of his visit to Anantapur, stay there for over a week and the planned departure on the 11th, had spread in all parts of the district. So a huge crowd was waiting at the platform. Within a minute after the train stopped, Papa woke up and descended to the platform.

As a large number of women were sitting in an orderly manner on an adjacent platform, Papa was taken through the crowd to that platform. The moment Papa

took his seat on a chair there, the orderly crowds became most disorderly. At first the women rushed forward to prostrate before Papa, while the men were standing on one side. Many old women and children fell down and were trampled upon by others. This scene went on for five to ten minutes. Now the men also began to rush forward for Pranam as they thought the train was about to start. They pushed the women away. Soon the Station Master led Papa to the compartment and in another minute the train whistled off.

While Papa was on the platform, Mataji remained in the train and a crowd of women-devotees gathered around her. When she was engaged with them, a monkey came from behind and took away some packets from a handbag that was kept on the seat. Timely intervention by the co-passengers did not permit the monkey to get away with the things. They were dropped outside, and later recovered. Mataji was anxious about Papa's dentures, which were in the bag. On examination they were found in tact at the bottom of the bag.

The next scene was at Penukonda. The platform was nearly full of devotees headed by Janakiram. They were all waiting for Papa's Darshan. Janakiram requested Papa and Mataji to get down and occupy the chairs kept for them in the centre of a large group of people, males and females, all sitting in regular order. Papa and Mataji took their seats and the next minute confusion followed. In their rush to do Pranam they pushed the weaker ones aside and trampled upon those who fell down. Papa watched the scene for a minute. He could not suffer to see children and old women being stepped upon by sturdy young men and grown up school

boys. He got up from the seat, asked Mataji to follow, and literally fought his way through the crowd back to the compartment. When they both got back safely, Janakiram also followed them.

Papa (*to Janakiram*): "Your crowd is uncontrollable. You made a mistake in asking us to get down when you could not control the crowd."

Janakiram: "Papa, they do not obey me. They are carried away by emotion and nothing could stop them."

None was allowed inside the compartment for some time. Later they started pushing their way in and the compartment was full and there was regular skirmishing at the doorstep. By this time the hits and knocks received from the bowing heads of devotees had begun to give pain to Papa's feet, especially the toes having ingrowing nails. Papa then sat up on the seat with crossed legs in such a way that the feet were not exposed. But the women-devotees who were crowding in the compartment caught hold of Papa's feet from either side, pulled them out and placed their heads on them. Papa, however, submitted and kept the feet out as long as they wanted, without any further resistance; but he desired that no more persons may be permitted inside the compartment after those that came in had cleared out. Mataji stood at the entrance and hundreds of devotees placed their heads on her feet — in a manner far from orderly and peaceful. When this was going on, Papa, who was quietly watching the game from behind, remarked: "These people will break Mataji's feet. They have done enough with Ramdas'." A few minutes before the train left, Mataji requested Papa to

kindly come near the door and shower his gracious glance on the crowd. Papa did so and received some more knocks on his toes. Everything was calm when the train gained speed leaving thousands of devotees on the platform to find their way back home. Papa took his seat with so much joy as if he had just escaped from a severe storm. He could enjoy this well-earned rest only for about an hour, as Hindupur was nearing. The experience at Penukonda made Papa decide not to get out of the compartment at Hindupur.

As soon as the door of the compartment was opened, Papa and Mataji stood at the entrance facing the disorderly crowd, and refused to get down. The devotees began to prostrate and offer fruits and garlands to them. As soon as a garland was put, Papa took it out and threw it in the air and there were hundreds of hands raised to catch it. The fruits were also distributed at random then and there. After standing at the door like this for about ten minutes, Papa got back to his seat, and a few from the crowd entered the compartment. One young man, overpowered by emotion, came running to Papa with his mouth fully open and bent down as if he was going to devour his feet. By the will of the all-merciful Ram, he just left Papa's feet safe after licking them to his satisfaction.

Nanjunda Sastri of Manepalli, who was with Papa at Anantapur throughout and who also followed him to this station, was of immense help in protecting Papa from being crushed in the midst of the huge and unruly crowd of devotees. He always stood at Papa's side. While writing about Sastri, his great love for Papa as well

as his devoted service deserve special mention.

Sastri has his own unique way of doing things. One thing made Mataji laugh daily and it became a standing joke. When the singing of Ramnam in chorus was going on by a large number of devotees and it was found necessary to stop it for some reason or other, he would shout out 'O-O-O-O-M,' and this always served as a brake. Whenever Mataji heard him saying 'O-O-O-O-M,' she used to roar with laughter; and later, even in the absence of Mataji, all others would laugh remembering Mataji's reaction to it.

It was getting dark and the train was nearing Bangalore. Though it started nearly an hour late, it had made up the time and it was expected that the train would arrive at Bangalore only about 30 minutes late. Gajendra was waiting at Yeshwantpur, a station prior to Bangalore, and he joined the party. Amongst various topics that he talked about, mention was made of P. S. Gopal Rao's name.

Gajendra (*to Papa*): "After you left Bangalore last week, Gopal Rao left for Conjeevaram to have Darshan of Sri Sankaracharya. Papa, wherever he goes he is after relics. From Udipi he even took a wooden plank used by Madhvacharya. Now he is trying his best to see that Papa visits Madras. He has asked me to anyhow persuade Papa to decide in favour of such a visit. I, of course, replied, 'Whatever Papa decides is final. He cannot be persuaded to change his plans'."

Papa: "You are Gajendra. If you get yourself caught by a crocodile in the Bay of Bengal and cry for help, Ramdas will come there."

Gajendra: "There are no crocodiles in the Bay of Bengal."

Papa: "There are other equally ferocious and dangerous water-animals."

Gajendra: "Oh? Gopal Rao, when he knows this, will himself act as the crocodile so that Papa may come to Madras."

S: "Let him not forget what fate that crocodile met with."

Papa: "It was cut into pieces but it also got Moksha, as Gajendra did. But Ramdas wants them to get Moksha while living in the body. Moksha after the body drops is a different thing."

CHAPTER V

MATAJI AT BREAKFAST : ADMONITION TO DEVOTEES

Place: Bangalore.

Wednesday, 11th November, 1953.

Bangalore Station. 8 p.m. Sarangapani Mudaliar and his sons, Narasimha Rao Naidu and his family, and a few others were waiting at the platform. After the party got down and the luggage was unloaded, the whole group walked up to the car waiting outside.

S: "This is a very long platform."

Papa: "Ramdas could not have his usual evening walk. Now he can have it."

Narasimha Rao Naidu: "I have a telegram from Hanumayamma to say that she is coming in the night to have Papa's Darshan."

Papa: "Is she coming? Did she get a tenant for her house? She has been sending letters and telegrams for blessings. There is no end to her asking for blessings."

Sarangapani Mudaliar's wife, daughter, son (Ranganathan) and a few other devotees greeted Papa at 19, Race Course Road, Bangalore. Papa was happy to see

Ranganathan (Sarangapani's second son) restored to normal health. He was seriously ill on the day Papa arrived last week and Papa had gone to see him at the hospital. When he prostrated himself before Papa, Papa said: "Ranganathan, Oh, you are so active and smart as if you were never ill!"

Thursday, 12th November, 1953.

Sarangapani Mudaliar's residence. 5 p.m. Some devotees had gathered in Papa's room. Subbaiyer, Narasimha Rao Naidu, Ramachandra Rao, Gajendra, S. and some others were on one side, Mataji and a few women were on the other side of Papa. Looking at S. who was writing something, Subbaiyer asked him what he was writing. Papa then told Subbaiyer, "He is taking down some notes."

Subbaiyer: "He is doing God's work."

Papa: "What is not God's work?"

Subbaiyer: "Anything that is done with the remembrance of God and as a dedication to Him is God's work; and also whatever is done as prompted by God." ✓

Papa: "Everything is God's work, because God alone prompts all actions." ✓

Subbaiyer: "But actions of those whose lives are completely dedicated to God are different from those of ordinary men. S. is wearing the badge of renunciation, the ochre cloth."

A Devotee: "Papa, what does the ochre colour actually denote?"

Papa: "Sannyasis put on ochre cloth, Buddhists

put on yellow cloth. Ochre colour is a mixture of yellow and red, with more red in it. That is the colour of fire. If a Sannyasi is seen coming at a distance, from the cloth you make out that the desires of his lower nature are aflame. If a Buddhist monk wearing yellow cloth is coming, you understand that as the dead body has yellow colour, the monk is dead to the world, i.e., his desires are all dead."

A Devotee: "What does white cloth indicate?"

Papa: "It indicates purity."

A Devotee: "There are some naked Sadhus also. Even now there is one at Chidambaram."

Subbaiyer: "I have seen one moving about like a child. He must be completely above body-consciousness."

A Devotee: "Otherwise how can they remain naked?"

S: "There was a great Avadhuta saint near Salem."

Gajendra: "Yes, he was called Chendamangalam Swamigal. It is his disciple who is now at Chidambaram."

Papa: "Have you heard of one Balasubramaniam? He was a professor in a college; a short, stout and fair-looking young man. He got initiation from Chendamangalam Swamigal and is wandering about naked somewhere.

"Nakedness must be of the soul, not merely outside: This friend Balasubramaniam wrote to Ramdas that though he was naked outside he had yet to become naked

within. He was frank and confessed his condition. Ramdas advised him that having taken to this path he must carry on, not retract. Finally he is sure to have the inner nakedness also."

Subbaiyer: "If such people do not get God, can we, who eat and make merry, get Him?"

Papa: "A man attains God when His grace descends on him, wherever he may be and whatever way he lives. Whether he wanders about as a naked Sadhu or lives an ordinary life in the world, when God's grace comes, he is liberated."

Subbaiyer: "That is the excuse for us all to live this life of comfort and say, 'I will get Him when His grace comes to me'."

Papa: "Otherwise what do you expect him to do? He struggles hard and does not get Him. Let him not kick against the pricks, but wait calm and serene for His grace to transform him once for all. Why should he fret and struggle? Ramdas does not say that he must entirely give up his effort to attain God. He must make intense effort, but his dissatisfaction and internal fight must stop. If he goes on struggling, God does not come. We churn the curd for sometime and then leave it to settle down before butter is formed. In the same way, he must learn to patiently wait. God comes in His good time. By grumbling he puts off His coming. Grumblers cannot have Him; in other words, He is far away from grumblers."

"You have heard the story of Sabari. She knew Rama would come to her, but did not know when."

Every day she was busy making arrangements to receive Him and what a joy she had in the 'very expectation of Rama's arrival! Though Rama did not come for years, hope kept her throughout in a state of joy. If this type of joy is not there in the expectation of God's coming, life becomes simply unbearable.

"Do you know why Sabari could do it? Because she was not learned. Our fault is that we are learned and so we are like 'Doubting Thomas'."

Subbaiyer: "Papa, does He not know that we are thinking of Him constantly?"

Papa: "Where is that man who is thinking of Him constantly? Let Ramdas see that man."

Subbaiyer: "I am, Papa."

Papa: "If you have been thinking of Him always, you must have become one with Him. There cannot be any doubt about it. The thinker and the thought become one. To continuously think of Him means to be rid of the ego-sense. The Sloka "*Ananyaschintayantomam . . .*" means that we should accept Him completely and entertain no other thought. This exclusive thought of God grants one always great joy. Such a one deserves to attain Him and gets Him."

A young man in the group, who was so far sitting quietly, came forward near Papa and said, "Swamiji, will you kindly give me *Mantropadesa*?"

Papa: "Why do you want initiation?"

Young Man: "Because I want peace. You gave initiation to a teacher this morning and what he told

Papa is the same that I have to say."

Papa: "That teacher has become the mouthpiece of thousands. Are you keen on having the Mantra?"

Young Man: "Very keen on having it from Ramdas himself."

Papa: "Where is Ramdas?"

Young Man: "Sitting before me."

Papa: "Is he simply Ramdas or Swami Ramdas?"
(No reply).

Young Man: "You had asked me to lead a righteous life. But by taking initiation of the Mantra, I am sure I will be better."

Papa: "All right, come nearer. Repeat what Ramdas says."

Papa then uttered Ramnam thrice and the young man repeated it.

Gajendra: "Papa, he is a good musician."

Papa: "Go on singing Ramnam in a fine tune for yourself and also for others."

A Devotee: "Should the Guru-Mantra be kept a secret?"

Papa: "You need not make a secret of it."

Subbaiyer: "When Papa repeats the Mantra, there is no humour or smile seen in Papa's face. At other times Papa is smiling. Papa is serene at the time of repeating the Mantra."

Papa: "Ramdas does not know. When he gives

Mantra initiation to anybody next time, please keep a mirror before him so that he can see how he looks."

The new friend who got initiation started singing a song.

Papa: "No songs. Sing only *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* now in a good tune."

There were not many devotees present last night but today a large number was pouring in. Bhajan continued on and on and devotees were not leaving Papa though it was past nine at night. Narasimha Rao Naidu prostrated before Papa, saying, "Papa, we are going. Shall come early in the morning. We may not be able to come to the aerodrome as it is too chill."

Papa: "All right. Go soon. Your health is not very good."

Narasimha Rao Naidu went out and in a few minutes came back and stood before Papa. Papa saw him and said: "You just went out. How is it you have come back?"

Narasimha Rao Naidu: "The thought of your departure tomorrow is weighing on our mind. We have been only enjoying good meals and things like that. We cannot honestly say that we are following Papa's teachings and are advancing on the path. I know, Papa, that we are giving you a lot of trouble. Of course Sri Ramakrishna had said to one of his devotees that he had not come only to eat Rasagullas and live comfortably. So also we know, in your infinite compassion and love for us, you won't mind our bothering you, but we do feel sometimes that we give you absolutely no rest."

Friday, 13th November, 1953.

Sarangapani Mudaliar's house. This morning Papa got up at 4-45 as the party had to be ready to leave the house by 6-15. Packing had to be done and it took sometime. At about 5-30 a.m., Narasimha Rao Naidu and his family and a few other devotees came and were with Papa.

The plane carrying Papa, Mataji and S. to Hyderabad took off from the Bangalore airport at 7 a.m.

Place: Hyderabad.

Friday, 13th November, 1953.

Rani Lalita Devi and a number of other devotees were awaiting the arrival of Papa and party at the Hyderabad aerodrome. The plane arrived at 9 a.m. When they came out of the plane, Papa and Mataji were profusely garlanded by the devotees. After sitting in the waiting room for a few minutes, the party drove to the residence of Rani Lalita Devi at Durga Nivas, Kheratabad.

A few minutes before 2 p.m., Sri Baldoon Dhingra, an officer of the Education Department of the UNESCO, came with a friend. There were none else in Papa's room except S. He explained to Papa how the UNESCO is useful to the world and so on.

Papa: "Has it been successful in bringing about peace and harmony in the world?"

Dhingra: "I cannot say how far it has contributed towards bringing about peace and harmony. That you must know better. It is working for the furtherance:

of the educational, cultural and scientific relations among different nations."

Papa: "It is doing splendid work, though it has not yet achieved what we expected of it."

Dhingra: "My problem now is whether I should continue there or serve in India itself."

Papa: "You must continue where you now are. God has placed you in that position. A really good man in an organisation can influence all the rest."

Dhingra: "Who is to decide whether I am good or not?"

Papa: "Ramdas sees good only in everything. If everyone in the world sends forth a good thought, there will be such peace and harmony that there will be no possibility of a war. And India has an important part to play in this great task."

Dhingra: "Then why is it, Swamiji, that people are feeling a sense of frustration in India now?"

Papa: "Because this is the transition period. Ramdas envisages a bright future for India."

Dhingra: "I am still thinking why I should not do my work in India."

Papa: "You carry on with your work there. But if you think you will be able to serve India better by leaving your present work in UNESCO, you will, of course, be justified in leaving it."

2-15 p.m. As there were a number of devotees waiting, Papa got up from his seat. The friends took leave

of him, but came again in the evening with Papa's books "Divine Life," "In Quest of God" and "Sayings of Ramdas," and wanted Papa's autograph. The friend who accompanied Dhingra told Papa that he was sending the latter two books to a judge friend of his at Amsterdam, as the friend had enquired of Papa and his writings when they met at Amsterdam.

After Dhingra and his friend left, Papa remarked: "Do you know why these people come here? When they go to Europe and other places abroad, some people ask them if they have heard of Ramdas. Now they can say they have seen him in flesh and blood and have also read his books."

S: "Exactly so. The friend who came with Dhingra told me that when he was in Europe last, some of his friends asked him if he had seen Swami Ramdas. He was ashamed to reply that he had not even heard of him. That was why he was anxious to get some books and read them."

At about 6 p.m., Prof. Krishna Rao and some others were sitting before Papa. Sivmohanlal and Ratnam (of Ramanashram) and another young man with a long beard came in. Sivmohanlal, with his characteristic smile, rushed forward to Papa, prostrated at his feet and remained in that position with his head at Papa's feet. Seeing this, Rani Lalita Devi remarked to Prof. Krishna Rao, "Swamiji's favourite devotee has come."

Krishna Rao: "Who is not Papa's favourite devotee? Everybody is a favourite."

Lalita Devi: "No. He is a favourite devotee. See

how long he prostrates before Papa. I do not do like that."

After Sivmohanlal got up, he introduced to Papa the bearded friend who had accompanied him: "Papa, this saint is from Raichur. He had been to the Himalayas in search of God. He stays in a village near Raichur. He has come on some work to Hyderabad. He stays with me and gives me the joy of his company."

Papa: "You are honey and bees rush at you."

Hearing this, Sivmohanlal fell at Papa's feet with bubbling joy.

Papa: "How did you get filled with honey? Where did you get it all from?"

Sivmohanlal (*again falling at Papa's feet and touching his toes*): "This is the place I get all the honey from."

Saying this he kissed the toes again and again.

Saturday, 14th November, 1953.

Residence of Rani Lalita Devi. Papa's health does not permit of his visiting houses as he used to do during his previous visits. There were pressing requests from many devotees that Papa should make it convenient to go to their houses. They were, however, disappointed at Papa's refusal, especially after they knew that Papa had agreed to visit the house of Rani Barkat Rai during the Gita recitations on Sunday, and also the residence of Swami Govinda Tirtha (Dattar Swami), who is ill and so cannot come to Papa.

Mataji was taking breakfast in the company of Prof. Krishna Rao, Mrs. Krishna Rao, Mrs. Damodar Rao,

Vasudev Rao Biderkar, M. G. Krishna Rao, Veeraraghavan and a few others. M. G. Krishna Rao, who was one of those disappointed ones, talked in Kanārese to Prof. Krishna Rao holding him responsible for Papa's refusal to visit their houses and for accepting the invitation from Rani Barkat Rai and agreeing to go to see Dattar Swami. M. G. Krishna Rao appeared to have lost his temper as he spoke on the subject.

Then the talks turned to Veeraraghavan's sorrow for not receiving a detailed reply from Papa to his long letter in which he had asked for clarification of his doubts.

When M. G. Krishna Rao was talking, Mataji wished to give him a suitable reply, but kept quiet. When Veeraraghavan's point came, she lost her temper and asked Veeraraghavan in particular and others in general: "You say you did not get a long and detailed letter from Papa. But have you so far tried to live up to one word of what Papa has written in his innumerable letters to you or told you in his talks with you?"

She then said as a hit to M. G. Krishna Rao: "You people worry Papa to come to your house and do not have any consideration for his health. You charge Prof. Krishna Rao with persuading Papa to go to Rani Barkat Rai's house and not to yours. Are you all still entertaining such petty ideas? What is the benefit that you aim at getting by Papa's contact? You wish only to make the best of his stay here for your material ends; to have a car, to flourish in your business and so on.

"As Papa's health would not permit, he did not go to Hindupur and Penukonda where thousands were

anxious to see him. Some of them had to come to Anantapur for his Darshan. Papa has come to your place. Instead of taking the real benefit of his stay here, you try to pick faults and magnify them. If you all behave like this, it will be better that next time we omit Hyderabad from our programme. You will fare better if we keep away from you."

All those present were surprised at the way Mataji talked, and Mrs. Damodar Rao started weeping. Mataji saw that the situation was tense and thought that she might talk more if she continued sitting there. So she came away, and told Papa what she talked to them. Papa was sitting in the adjacent room. When others also finished their breakfast and came near Papa, Prof. Krishna Rao told Papa how furious Mataji was.

Papa: "Hyderabad devotees are still Rajasic. Because they were Rajasic, Ramdas asked them to write 14 lacs Ramnam. Even after writing so much they have not become much better."

* * *

S. (to Mataji): "Papa is to go this evening to Balwantrao Ghate's place. Do they prepare *rotis* all right for Papa?"

Mataji: "I have told them that we would bring *rotis* from here."

S: "Why should we prepare *rotis* so early and carry them from here? Is it not enough if we prepare them after going there? We shall, if necessary, take some wheat-flour with us."

Mataji: "That will be all right. As soon as we go

there I shall also come with you to the kitchen and you can prepare the *rotis* in no time."

S: "When I go to the kitchen in different places to prepare *rotis* for Papa, I am surrounded by women everywhere and I have to move with them and talk with them as if I am one among them. I feel I would do well to mingle with them, wearing a *saree*!"

Mataji: "Yes, you have to closely move with them. Perhaps this has come to you as a *Sadhana*. If you closely move with women, you will gradually develop their character."

S: "Why do you prefer women's character to men's?"

Mataji: "Women have naturally more love and an attitude of easy surrender. If they come across with anything disagreeable or meet with oppositions, they easily give in without much of self-assertion. Men assert themselves, and they are so by nature. By this 'giving in' quality of women, they are able to remain loyal to saints to the very last, accepting or ignoring minor differences. I am afraid to stay in the company of men for a long time lest I should develop their qualities."

In the evening Papa was with Balwantrao Ghatе, Sessions Judge, in his house at Secunderabad. There was a long continued *Bhajan*. It was arranged at Ghatе's place for the convenience of the devotees of the locality. Papa and other devotees had their meal at Ghatе's place.

CHAPTER VI

PROBLEM OF GRACE : THE SOLUTION

Place: Hyderabad.

Sunday, 15th November, 1953.

Residence of Rani Lalita Devi. Papa has just finished his breakfast. Prof. Krishna Rao, M. G. Krishna Rao, Damodar Rao, Vasudeva Rao, Veeraraghavan and a few others are sitting in front of Papa.

Prof. K. Rao: "Papa, we are having interesting questions and answers. Yesterday, in the reply to the question about Sai Baba, Papa never mentioned the name of Sai Baba."

S: "It was only a general question. By referring to Sai Baba the questioner was meaning only saints in general."

Papa: "Ramdas talked of only saints in general. He did not want to talk about anybody or his opinion in particular."

S: "In yesterday's talks about God's grace, you said God showers His grace as a child gives away things. By comparing God to a child, are we not saying that He is irresponsible and that from His point of view there is no such thing as a deserving or undeserving case?"

Papa: "That is what the devotees take Him to be, especially when they see that those who do severe and intense Sadhana for years together do not get anything, and an apparently undeserving person is suddenly granted inner illumination."

S: "Papa rightly put it as 'apparently undeserving.' It is only in *our* opinion that he is undeserving."

Papa: "Take the case of Anna (T. Bhavani Shankar Rao). He was regular, systematic and intense in his spiritual practices from the very early age of his life. At that time Ramdas was laughing at him and making fun of him. He would, in those days, tell us that we should pray and remember God. But we took his advice lightly and did not heed it. When the change came over Ramdas and he became God's ardent devotee, Anna was the first to recognize the conversion. He held Ramdas in great reverence. Then Ramdas wondered what God had done about him."

Damodar Rao: "Was Papa an atheist in those days?"

Papa: "Yes, he was. Something like it. He was laughing at those who were engaged in spiritual disciplines such as Japa and Pooja. He did not believe in the repetition of Ramnam by people who were having *mala* in hand and at the same time abusing and speaking ill of others. He did not like hypocrites or the God who made them so."

Damodar Rao: "Were worldly worries responsible for taking Papa's mind Godwards and was Papa unhappy because of losing jobs very often?"

Papa: "No. Ramdas was care-free and independent. Even when he lost a job he did not mind it."

S: "But, just before Papa started repeating Ramnam, was there not any immediate cause for his *vairagya*?"

Papa: "He was unhappy because of the great hypocrisy, deception, violence and the consequent suffering he found in the world."

S: "Papa, our question remains still unanswered. How can we compare God to a child in giving grace to aspirants?"

Papa: "It is said in the Upanishads that He reveals Himself in the hearts of those whom He chooses. On what basis He chooses we do not know. In fact, to whom does He reveal Himself? He reveals Himself to Himself when He chooses. It is all His game. In one He hides Himself and plays the part of an ignorant man, in another He removes the veil and plays the part of a wise one. So He is Himself everything. He is the seeker. He is the sought."

S: "Papa, this solves all problems. This is the answer which leaves no room for any further question."

Papa: "So you got the answer."

When the morning Bhajan was going on, a car brought a woman and a few men. It stopped in front of the Bhajan Mandir near the Shamiana. The woman sitting in the car was in a state of trance and therefore she remained there undisturbed. After some time, when she came out of the trance, she was asked to alight from

the car and take her seat in the room in the Bhajan Mandir.

It was ascertained later that she came from Yadgir and her name was Manikamma. She has been living without food and water for the last many years. From six months she has been observing silence. She does not allow anybody to touch her as that disturbs her greatly. Those who came with her — who were her followers — were anxious that she should have Papa's Darshan and *Upadesh*.

When the Bhajan was over, Papa and Mataji were escorted to the room where Manikamma was sitting on a chair. Two chairs were placed by her side. Papa sat on one chair; and Mataji, prostrating before her and also before Papa, sat on the other chair. When Manikamma was told that it was Swami Ramdas and Mother Krishnabai who were before her, she just folded her hands to them, sitting in the chair. She was asked by her followers to write on a slate, which she had, anything she wanted to say to Papa. She wrote down something in Telugu, which one of her followers translated to Papa like this: "I am very unhappy to see that so much of cruelty exists in this world. My prayer is that people may be relieved of their suffering."

Papa replied in English, which was translated to her in Telugu: "Our mission is to spread Ramnam with the purpose of bringing peace and harmony in the world."

She was again about to write something on the slate when Papa said he was to go soon as there was an engagement for him. Rani Lalita Devi suggested that she

might stay there till 2 p.m., when Papa would be free to see her. She nodded her head in agreement.

Papa then got into the car to go to the residence of Rani Barkat Rai to attend the Gita recitations. When the car started, Prof. Krishna Rao, who was sitting in the front seat with Rani Barkat Rai, said, "Papa, so you met that mother. She observes silence, and so did not talk to Papa."

Papa: "That is her will."

Krishna Rao: "Any way, Papa did not commune with her."

Papa: "Ramdas is always in communion with you all. He communes with all of you whether you are talking, walking or doing anything else."

Papa again met Manikamma at about 2 p.m. Commenting on this second meeting, Papa said:—

"Ramdas spent about ten minutes with her. It is all a confusion. She does not speak and cannot write correctly. And whatever she writes, the interpreters are misinterpreting. First she wrote, it seems, that Ramdas is a realised soul and is all-knowing. Immediately after that, she asked if Ramdas has realised. Later, Ramdas was told that he should give her the Mantra. When Ramdas uttered *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*, she took down the Mantra incorrectly. Finally she wanted to know what she should do. Ramdas advised her to take Ramnam. Her devotees wanted Ramdas to live with her for 15 days and fast."

A Devotee: "Papa, they say she is not taking food or water. Is it possible for one to live as she does?"

Papa: "Ramdas does not think she is fasting, and cannot believe the report."

A Devotee: "She is going into trance very often."

Papa: "She may be. One who is struggling or groping on the path, and is disgusted with the world may go into such trance in the Sadhana stage. But this trance is not the final thing."

His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya of the Puri Math who was then camping in Hyderabad, had sent word that he was coming to meet Papa in the evening. He came and took a seat specially made for him by the side of Papa's. When the Swamiji came, Papa was away from his seat to talk to Manikamma. Leaving her, Papa came to the Shamiana where the Swamiji was sitting. Papa gave him a warm embrace, touched his feet, and then sat near him.

The Swamiji requested Papa to talk on something. But Papa, with folded hands, told him that he was only a servant and did not know what to speak. He further prayed that he may be pleased to speak a few words on whatever subject he liked. He agreed and gave a very interesting discourse to the audience about the glory of Ramnam. He impressed upon everybody the importance of taking Ramnam ceaselessly, even during sleep. He suggested that to maintain the thread of remembrance during sleep, one should intensely repeat Ramnam for sometime before going to bed and then sleep with the Name on the lips and remembrance in the mind. While waking up from sleep one must have God-thought and the repetition of the Mantra should follow. Before concluding his discourse, he chanted aloud the Mantra Sri

Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram and made the audience sing it in chorus and finally advised them that to get real benefit of the Japa, they must get up early in the morning and regularly do Japa for at least 1½ hours daily.

The Swamiji is about 80 years of age. His discourse was both inspiring and interesting.

Later, referring to his visit, Papa remarked: "How lucky we are! Mahatmas are good enough to come and give us Darshan here. Today Ramdas was very happy to hear the Swamiji talking about Ramnam. The embrace Ramdas enjoyed much. His body is as soft as cotton."

Monday, 16th November, 1953.

Residence of Rani Lalita Devi. Papa went out to see Swami Govinda Tirtha (Dattar Swami) and returned after spending a few minutes with him. The Swami was unwell, looked pale and had changed his clothes from ochre to white.

After meal, Papa was lying down. Rani Lalita Devi and S. were massaging his body. Mataji was sitting by the side of the cot.

Lalita Devi: "Papa touched Shankaracharya's feet yesterday."

Papa: "He is a Sannyasi and also an elderly person."

Lalita Devi: "Papa is also a Sannyasi and an elderly person."

Papa: "No. Ramdas is only a child and he has every right to prostrate before his father."

Lalita Devi: "What is your opinion about Shankaracharya?"

Papa: "He is the father and Ramdas is his child."

S. (to Lalita Devi): "You cannot extract any such opinion from Papa."

Papa had closed his eyes and was lying quiet for some time. After a heavy breath, he opened his eyes and said: "Ramdas has been remembering Ramkishore very much during last two days."

Mataji: "Yes, since yesterday, Papa has been now and then remembering him."

When Veeraraghavan came to fan Papa, Papa said: "Ramdas will give you some work after he gets up. There is a film negative of Ramkishore. You have to get a print of it."

In the afternoon Papa was in the Bhajan Mandir for the usual talks. Papa spoke in Hindi.

A Devotee: "Is Ramdas still a Das of Ram? If so when is he going to be Ram Himself?"

Papa: "Before starting the Sadhana, Ramdas did not know who he was. When he started Sadhana he became Ram's Das. At that time his attitude was that Ram and Das were different. Later he realised that Das and Ram were one. Even after realising this, the Dasabhava still remains, though it is Ram alone who is playing the part of Das. This means that Ramdas is Ram and also His Das. Can you understand now?"

Till yesterday Papa was talking in English. It is only today that he began to speak in Hindi. After giv-

ing the above answer to the devotees, he said, "Is Ramdas speaking Hindi all right? Though he was speaking Hindi in North India last year, he had not correctly learnt it. Now he has had some sort of study of the language."

Mrs. Damodar Rao: "Papa, so many teachers sitting before you will teach you Hindi. So many Gurus for Papa!"

Papa: "Yes, Ramdas shall remain a humble disciple of all the Gurus."

Ratnam: "When Guha was taking Rama across the river, he was telling Rama, 'O Lord, I am taking you across this river in a boat. But you should take me across the ocean of Samsar.' So also we shall teach you Hindi and you should teach us how to attain God."

One Devotee: "Would any physical disability stand in the way of one's spiritual progress?"

Papa: "What do you mean exactly by physical disability?"

Devotee: "Say, one is a cripple."

Papa: "Being a cripple cannot be a disqualification for spiritual progress. Such a one repeats Ramnam and forgets all about his body. If you mean any disease in the body, there is a chance of the mind being dragged to the body often. In that case, you have to take proper medicine, get cured and then start doing your Sadhana."

Damodar Rao: "Suppose a man is suffering from severe heart trouble and the doctor advises him not to repeat Ramnam. What shall he do?"

Papa: "Let him mentally repeat."

Ratnam: "But mental repetition will be difficult for a beginner."

Papa: "What else could he do?"

• Vasudeva Rao: "That patient defied the doctor's instructions and repeated Ramnam and is now free from heart trouble."

Papa: "That is it. That is exactly what Ramdas also would have suggested. But when you said that the doctor advised the patient not to repeat aloud, he suggested that mental repetition may go on. You know that doctors are, after all, bugbears.

"Why should one be afraid of heart trouble for repeating Ramnam? If on account of repeating Ramnam the heart fails, let it go. That is the best one can do while passing away — repeating Ramnam."

A Devotee: "Swamiji, it is said somewhere that we must repeat the Mantra as many lakhs of times as there are letters in it, before we can expect any effect. Is that correct?"

Papa: "Not as many lakhs, but as many crores."

A Devotee: "Ah, crores! Is it possible? No. It is impossible. How can one do so much Japa?"

Another Devotee: "Haridas repeated 10 lakhs of times daily." (*Perhaps here each letter of the Mantra was counted as one*).

The Devotee: "Does it take effect only after the completion of that number?"

Papa: "It takes effect almost immediately you start the Japa. The process of purification commences and you can yourself watch your progress. Real progress depends upon the intensity of your devotion to God."

A Devotee: "Many people say that Swami Ramdas is a great saint. What does Swamiji think about himself?"

Papa: "Ramdas is smaller than the smallest child of Ram. That fact is also made known to him by Ram Himself. Otherwise he does not know himself what he is and what he is not."

A Lady Devotee: "Papa, you narrated yesterday how you saved that Mangalore boy who was working in a hotel. After he had your Darshan, he renounced everything and left for the Himalayas. Another man full of vices was transformed by your embrace. So, will you not kindly transform us also by your power?"

Papa: "Mother, what are you talking? Ramdas is only a child and you are the Mother Shakti — the embodiment of Divine power. How could the Mother ask the child to transform Her?"

The Devotee: "Let me remain a mother and also remain a child — both."

Papa: "You can play any game you like. Ramdas is always your child."

The Devotee: "That is how you evade the question altogether. It is not that I alone want your grace. You may transform anyone of us here. I shall be satisfied."

Papa: "You are the embodiment of Divine power."

That is how Ramdas sees you. But you pretend as if you have no power."

The Devotee: "That is how you see us. But we must ourselves also see like that. We do not do so. Grant us that vision."

Papa: "What a play is this? When you are verily that Almighty power itself, why do you ask for it?"

The Devotee: "Swamiji, when you bless one, how does the blessing work upon him?"

Papa: "Ramdas never blesses, he only loves all."

10 p.m. When Papa was about to go to bed, he was told that there was a trunk-telephone call for him from Bombay. Papa hurried up to the telephone and took up the receiver:—

"Hallo! hallo! Ah, how are you? It is very good. How is Chandrakala? Oh, good. She must be completely well by the time we come there. How is your health? You must also take care of it and be all right before we come there. Mataji is standing by his side here. Birthday! Whose? Shraddha's birthday! Ah, Shraddha! Blessings to you for a happy, prosperous, healthy and long life. How do you like it? Pranav! How do you do? Excellent. Ah, ha, ha, ha, that is very good, the best piece of news. Yes, got it this morning. All right."

The call was from Sri Natverlal G. Parikh, Ivorine, Churchgate, Bombay.

CHAPTER VII

HOW RAMNAM SAVED THEM

Place: Hyderabad.

Tuesday, 17th November, 1953.

Residence of Rani Lalita Devi. 7 a.m. Papa has finished his breakfast. The first batch of devotees had come very early for Darshan and they were sitting in front of Papa.

S: "During yesterday's talks Papa said that Papa does not bless anybody. How can Papa say so?"

Papa: "Ramdas does not blèss anybody. Some years ago he was only writing "Love and Namaskars" in his letters to friends. But they did not like his giving them Namaskars. They wanted blessings. So he uses the word 'blessings,' which actually stands for only love."

Bhagatji (Jagannathdas by name), a Gujarati devotee in Hyderabad, used to attend the daily Bhajans and talks. He had no talks with Papa. Last Sunday, at Rani Barkat Rai's house, Sivmohanlal introduced Bhagatji to Papa as a very devoted and saintly person. Thereafter he began to come and sit near Papa, embrace him, and press his feet like an innocent child.

Papa has to leave Hyderabad by the 9 a.m. train to Sholapur. The party left Rani Lalita Devi's residence

in time, but was detained at the Railway Station for a very long time as the train was late. The waiting room was fully crowded with devotees and they all rejoiced at the good fortune of having a longer time with Papa.

Place: Sholapur.

Wednesday, 18th November, 1953.

The train arrived at Sholapur at about 9 p.m. Papa was received at the Station by Sri N. L. Mudur and was taken to his residence. Instead of three, the party has now swelled up to eleven. Prof. Krishna Rao and his wife travelled with Papa by train but had sent Veerarahavan, Nanjunda Sastri, Krishna Rao's mother and M. Satyanarayana Rao's wife, in advance, to Sholapur by his car. M. G. Krishna Rao had sent his son and daughter in advance to Akalkot Station. They joined Papa at that Station with food got ready for him and the party. They had cooked the food at the house of the Station Master, Akalkot, and were bubbling with joy when they got into the compartment with the hot meals for Papa, and more so when they saw Papa eating.

N. L. Mudur is a cousin of Mataji. When Papa visited Sholapur on the previous occasion, he had stayed for a day at Mudur's house.

Thursday, 19th November, 1953.

Mudur's house. News about Papa's arrival had spread and devotees were pouring in large numbers from early morning for Darshan. Govind Balwant Kulkarni Sarolkar of Mohol (Papa's host at Mohol) came at about noon. He saw Mataji and wanted to know what special arrangements he should make while Papa comes to

Mohol. Mataji told him that only a separate house and a good supply of water was needed. He then returned leaving his son there to escort Papa and party to Mohol.

The party left Sholapur at 4-15 p.m., in three cars. Besides Prof. Krishna Rao's car that was left at Papa's disposal, a taxi also was engaged to accommodate the rest of the party. There was another car belonging to a Parsi devotee in which were seated Mudur's wife and daughter, Maniben and another Parsi lady. In Papa's car sat Nanjurda Sastri. Papa asked Sastri to go and sit in the taxi in order to give place to Sarolkar's son who was escorting the party. Sastri therefore took his seat in the taxi. Papa's car started first, the Parsi friend Nagarwala's car followed and the taxi behind it. Veeraghavan drove Papa's car.

Place: Mohol.

Thursday, 19th November, 1953.

At the outskirts of Mohol there were waiting the host and some other devotees. Some of them garlanded Papa and Mataji. The whole group then walked behind the car repeating Ramnam. In fifteen minutes Papa was in the house intended for his five days' stay at Mohol.

It was a spacious house of the ancient style. There was a big room where the newly made mud-flooring, smeared with cowdung, was still damp. Besides, a kitchen and long verandahs on three sides of the house completed the whole structure. By the side of a verandah were kept a big drum filled with water and a few empty pots.

Immediately on arrival, Papa was asked to take his seat on a mattress spread on the floor of the verandah, and many men and women came for his Darshan. Mataji, in the meantime, made a scrutiny of the house and was looking for the other two cars to arrive. She waited for an unduly long time and it was getting late for Papa to take his evening milk. Soon Mudur's wife, daughter, Maniben and the other Parsi woman arrived. With frightened faces, but with an expression of gratitude, they ran up to Papa, put their heads at his feet and with tears in their eyes, narrated what happened to them on the way:—

Maniben: "Papa, on the way, our driver lost control of the wheel with the result that the car made a swing and turned upside down. It was such a dangerous accident that all of us in it would have either died on the spot or received major injuries. But we all women were so calm and cool, that we were repeating Ramnam, one infusing courage into the other. We all came out of the car absolutely safe except for a small cut in my hand caused by a broken glass. One side of the car is completely smashed, though the engine is safe. It was a miracle and we attribute it to your grace and the glory of Ramnam."

Papa: "So Ramnam has saved your life. It is indeed by God's grace that you all came out unhurt."

Another Parsi Woman (*very excited*): "I was repeating aloud *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* and some others were repeating *Ramkrishna Hari*. How wonderfully courageous we were all! There was no panic. In the midst of the accident, Mudur's wife was

assuring us that nothing would happen to us. She asked her daughter to take heart. Papa, we now understand how Ramnam can save us from the greatest peril."

Lalita (*Mudur's daughter*): "Papa, I was sitting in the front seat and, after the accident, I found myself holding my spectacles in my hand very carefully. A hit here or there would have injured my eyes more than any other part of the body."

Papa: "The power of Ramnam has been proved. It has saved your life. Yours is now a concrete example as to how one can be saved from even the greatest calamity, if one has Ramnam on the tongue."

Maniben was then sent to the local doctor to have the cuts dressed suitably.

By this time most of the luggage had arrived and Mataji had started the kitchen work in right earnest. When the news of the accident reached her ears, she felt happy that all of them were unhurt, and remarked: "If some one in a party is destined to meet with any serious accident, the other members of the party are also involved. Something very serious would have happened but Ramnam saved you all."

Nanjunda Sastri and two others, who were in the taxi that followed, had got down and waited near the damaged car, and sent those who were in the unlucky car, by their taxi. They were later picked up by Prof. Krishna Rao's car.

Papa (*to S.*): "What is Mataji doing?"

S: "She received the things just now and has begun cooking in the kitchen."

Papa: "So she has started her favourite game. Is it not? All is a game after all."

By 7-30 p.m., milk for Papa was ready. A couple of wooden planks were placed in the big room and Papa was called in.

When Papa was walking up to the place where the planks were kept for him to sit, a thorn ran into his foot. Mataji pulled it out and showed it to S.

S: "Papa, I was walking in this room for such a long time and no thorn pricked my foot. How is it the moment you came in, you got it?"

Papa: "There may be plenty of them here. You will also get it. Don't worry."

Papa (*to Mataji*): "How do you like the arrangements? You wanted a separate house and a lot of water. You have both. What more do you want?"

Mataji (*laughing*): "That will do; we will arrange things and adjust ourselves."

Papa: "Have you asked for a cot?"

Mataji: "Not yet. I shall ask for it."

Papa took bread with ghee, vegetables and milk. After washing his hands he got up.

S: "Papa can now freely walk here. The thorns have been removed as far as possible."

Papa: "What about food for all of you?"

Mataji: "We are preparing a light food now and

from tomorrow we shall have regular meals."

Prof. Krishna Rao's Wife: "When they have made arrangements, we can prepare food for all of us."

Mataji: "Why only for all of us. We can even prepare for ten or fifteen more. We have no fear."

Papa: "Ramdas knows you have conquered fear. When you assure us like that, Ramdas is also free from all fear."

Mataji then saw to it that the Parsi woman, Mudur's wife and daughter and also the drivers of the cars, who were to return to Sholapur, were given food soon. Before starting, they came and took leave of Papa, when he said: "Have Ramnam always on your tongue and you will be free from all danger. By experience it is proved that Ramnam can be a great protector."

After they left, Sastri and S. were sitting near Papa and slowly stroking his legs. Papa looked tired after the journey and felt sleepy.

Papa: "Ramdas feels awfully tired and sleepy. The moment food went in, he is feeling more sleepy. After all it is an old horse. It cannot knock about as before."

Sastri: "Today's journey was not long."

Papa: "Ramdas is more tired because five of our party were involved in that accident and sustained a shock of their life and Ramdas has had a major portion of it. After the massage he will be all right."

A cot was brought and Papa's bed was being made thereon. When the hold-all was opened, Papa found in it some tins.

Papa: "You have brought rusks also? What are the other tins?"

S: "They are biscuits (salted); we have bread also."

Prof. Krishna Rao: "We have sent for more bread."

S: "Papa, we will have plenty to eat."

Papa: "Then Ramdas has no fear at all!"

It was decided that instead of sleeping in the room that has a damp floor, Papa might sleep in the verandah. Temporary screens were made to cover the sides. Sastri, Veeraraghavan, Prof. Krishna Rao and a few others spread their beds on the verandah to the left.

S. and Veeraraghavan started massaging Papa's back and legs.

Papa: "Where is he? He said he would send some screens."

S: "Who, Papa?"

Papa: "Our host, Govind Rao Kulkarni."

Veeeraraghavan: "He is a very old man."

Papa: "Though he is an old man, he has made all the necessary arrangements."

By this time, loud snoring was heard from one of the friends sleeping in the verandah on the left side.

Sastri: "Can Papa hear the noise?"

Papa: "Yes, very well."

S: "Somebody has started sawing wood."

Papa: "It is a regular saw-mill. They have put in a very big log of hard timber. Those who can absorb the sound may sleep near him. Perhaps Sastri who is by his side can do this before it reaches Ramdas."

"Now let us stop this talk. Ramdas feels sleepy."

The massaging was stopped. Papa got up from the cot. The cot was slightly moved to one side by Mataji.

Papa: "Is the cot standing all right or will the planks topple down when Ramdas turns from one side to the other?"

S: "It is firm. Even if Papa dances on it, it won't collapse."

Papa: "If Ramdas falls down, the fall may stop the working of the saw-mill!"

Laughing and laughing, Papa started coughing and asked for a dose of cough syrup. Mataji gave a dose and Papa went to sleep.

Friday, 20th November, 1953.

Papa got up as usual at 6 a.m. When asked if he had good sleep, Papa said: "It was fairly chill at night and Ramdas slept well."

It was 7-30 when Papa's breakfast was ready, as milk came late. Till 9 o'clock devotees were coming and going in large numbers. At 9 he was taken to a temple

nearby for a two-hour programme of Bhajan and Prava-
chan, during which Janardan Pant read out *Guru Stuti*,
composed by him in Marathi, and offered it at Papa's feet.

After his noon rest Papa was sitting in the verandah.
Mataji and S. were in the hall and cutting fruits for him.

Mataji (to S.): "Janardan Pant's daughter came to
me and quietly asked if I received her letter. I replied
I had not received any letter from her. She then said
she wrote to me something, even without the knowledge
of her father. It seems she wants some help to join some
boarding home or orphanage. It struck me then that it is
better she gets married, and some help, say about Rs. 500/-,
may be given to Janardan Pant to have the marriage
conducted soon. It is better to have a settled life soon,
than to get admission into a boarding home and so on.
I must tell this to Papa today itself so that he can speak
to Janardan Pant about it. The quicker it is done the
better. Please remind me about it when we are together."

S: "So you have to arrange for a marriage now."

Mataji: "Such are the only things that I can do.
We should put into practice what Papa teaches us. When
we have an opportunity like this we should not lose it."

S: "Janardan Pant has become very weak now."

Mataji: "When I think of what he was and what
he is now, the contrast is really great. I may seem to sit
in judgement on others, but I tell you that he appeared
to be so much advanced on the path that his Kundalini
must have risen to the heart centre. He attracted a large
number of men and women for his Pravachan. Later,

we received a letter that he got married and this is his condition."

When Papa came in to take fruits, Mataji did not make any reference to Janardan Pant; but when he came for his coffee at 3 o'clock, she explained to him what Janardan Pant's daughter told her and then put forward her suggestion also.

Papa: "The girl is so small. If married soon she will start bearing children one after another every other year, and in what a horrible condition she will be after some years! Is she going to get a rich husband? Somebody with a low salary may marry her, and with the poor salary and all the children what a life it will be!"

Mataji: "Papa, to leave these girls in some boarding home, under the wardens and all kinds of people in charge, is not safe. You know the mentality of these grown up girls nowadays. They cannot be trusted even under the direct protection of their parents. What can be their fate when they are under the care of strangers?"

Papa: "A few may go astray like that. But this bearing of children from now itself is simply horrible. She can learn something and earn for herself."

After finishing coffee, Papa went out without agreeing to her suggestion. But the same thing was revolving in Mataji's mind.

Mataji (to S.): "See, Papa has now completely turned down my suggestion; but you will see that after some time he comes and says what I say is right."

S: "Will you ask him about it again?"

Mataji: "I won't ask."

S: "Do you mean to say that Papa will think over the matter again and revise his opinion about it?"

Mataji. "Yes."*

At 4 p.m., Papa was again in the temple for the programme of Bhajan and Pravachan. Pravachan was by Prof. Bandre of Sholapur, a scholar in Kanarese. He spoke in Marathi about the glory of Divine Name.

The next programme was to begin at 8 p.m. A few minutes before 8 o'clock Papa sent a man to find out if the programme would start exactly at 8. News was brought that feeding was still going on in that place, and it would be some time before things would be ready for the programme. Papa waited till 9 and sent another man to find out how far arrangements had progressed. The man came to say that it would take another half an hour; everything was ready except the Bhajan party.

Papa: "Doesn't matter. Ramdas will go there now. Let the Bhajan party do Bhajan later. The Pravachan in Marathi may start."

Papa decided that he would return from there by 10 o'clock as it was difficult for him to sit longer at night. So Maruti did Pravachan for an hour in front of Papa. Papa was back at his place of residence by 10-15 p.m.

*The girl has since been married.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.

GLOSSARY

Aham Brahmasmi ..	I am Brahman, the Absolute Reality.
Ananda ..	Bliss absolute.
Ashram ..	Abode of a saint.
Atharva Veda ..	Last one of the four Vedas or sacred scriptures.
Avadhuta(s) ..	A holy person of great renunciation.
Avatar ..	Incarnation of God.
Bali ..	A powerful monkey chief (mentioned in the <i>Ramayana</i>), who was killed by Rama.
Bhagavad Gita ..	The well-known Hindu scripture dealing with Lord Krishna's discourse with Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra.
Bhajan ..	Remembering God by singing hymns or chanting His names.
Bhajan Mandir ..	Place set apart for Bhajan.
Bhakta ..	Devotee.
Bhakti ..	Devotion.
Bhava ..	Attitude.
Bhogi ..	One who is immersed in sense-pleasures.
Chit ..	Consciousness absolute.
Darshan ..	Holy vision or visit.
Das ..	Servant.
Dasabhava ..	Attitude of a servant.
Dasaratha Ram ..	Rama, the son of king Dasaratha.
Gajendra ..	An elephant devotee who was saved by Lord Vishnu from the clutches of a crocodile (mentioned in the Puranas).
Gerrua ..	Ochre.
Grihasta ..	Householder.

Guha	..	..	The head of a forest tribe who was a friend and devotee of Rama.
Gunas	..	..	Three qualities of nature: Sattwa — Harmony Rajas — Passion Tamas — Torpor
Guru (dev)	..	..	Spiritual preceptor.
Guru Mantra	..	..	A holy formula given by the Guru.
Guru Stuti	..	..	Song of praise to the Guru.
Hanuman	..	..	The great monkey devotee of Rama, mentioned in the <i>Ramayana</i> .
Japa	..	..	Repetition of God's name or Mantra.
Jnani	..	..	A man of Self-knowledge.
Kabir	..	..	A medieval Muslim religious reformer, mystic and writer of songs.
Kaliya	..	..	The name of a huge venomous snake subdued by Sri Krishna.
Kama	..	..	Lust or desire.
Karma	..	..	Action in general; duty; ritualistic worship.
Kinnara	..	..	A mythical being with a human figure and the head of a horse.
Krishna	..	..	One of the Avatars or incarnations of Lord Vishnu.
Krodha	..	..	Anger.
Kundalini	..	..	Spiritual energy lying dormant in all individuals at the foot of the spine.
Kunkum	..	..	A kind of yellowish-red powder used during worship among Hindus.
Kunti Devi	..	..	Mother of the Pandavas, mentioned in the <i>Mahabharata</i> .
Laddus	..	..	Sweetmeat balls.
Lanka	..	..	Ceylon.
Lobha	..	..	Greed
Mada	..	..	Pride.
Mahant	..	..	Head of a religious institution.

Maharshi ..	..	A great Rishi or seer of Truth.
Mahatma ..	..	A high souled person.
Mala ..	..	Rosary.
Mandir ..	..	Temple.
Mantra(s) ..	..	A mystic word or words.
Mantropadesa ..	..	Initiation of Mantra.
Math ..	..	Hindu monastery.
Matsarya ..	..	Jealousy.
Mithya ..	..	False.
Moha ..	..	Attachment.
Moksha ..	..	Liberation.
Nama Likhita Japa		The worship of God by writing His
Yajna ..	..	name repeatedly.
Nama Sankirtan ..	..	Singing of God's names.
Namaskars ..	..	Salutations.
Narayana ..	..	A name of Vishnu.
Pada-pooja ..	..	Washing and worshipping the feet.
Pandal ..	..	Temporary shelter made of mats.
Pooja ..	..	Worship.
Pranams ..	..	Prostrations.
Prarabdhas ..	..	Effects of actions done in previous lives.
Prasad ..	..	Food, etc., offered to God or saints.
Pravachan(s) ..	..	Discourse on any religious text.
Puranas ..	..	Books of Hindu mythology.
Rajasic ..	..	Having the quality of Rajas.
Ram ..	..	An epithet for God; one of the ten principal Avatars of Lord Vishnu.
Ramachandra ..	..	An Avatar of Lord Vishnu.
Ramnam ..	..	Ram's name.
Ram Navami ..	..	A holy day in the Hindu Calendar; birthday of Sri Rama.
Rasagullas ..	..	A variety of Bengali sweetmeat.
Roti(s) ..	..	Home-made bread.

Sabari	..	..	A Bhil woman greatly devoted to Rama.
Saddhya	..	..	The thing to be accomplished.
Sadhaka(s)	..	..	Spiritual aspirant.
Sadhana	..	..	Spiritual practice.
Sadhu	..	..	A holy person.
Samsar	..	..	The cycle of births and deaths.
Sankalpa	..	..	Wish; mental resolve.
Sannyasi	..	..	Religious mendicant.
Saree	..	..	An Indian woman's wearing cloth.
Sat	..	..	Existence absolute.
Shamiana	..	..	A kind of canopy.
Siddhas	..	..	Perfected souls.
Sita	..	..	Wife of Rama.
Sloka(s)	..	..	Verse.
Swami	..	..	A title generally prefixed to the name of a Sannyasi.
Upadesh	..	..	Initiation.
Upanishad(s)	..	..	Last portion of the Vedas.
Vairagya	..	..	Dispassion.
Valmiki	..	..	The first poet and the celebrated author of the <i>Ramayana</i> . Born a Brahmin, he led the life of a robber; was purified and raised to the status of Maharishi by the power of Ramnam which he received from sage Narada.
Vasanas	..	..	Tendencies of the mind.
Vyavahar	..	..	Business; any activity in the plane of duality.
Yoga(s)	..	..	The method by which union with God is attained; union of the soul with the Oversoul.
Yogi	..	..	One who practises Yoga or who has realised God through Yoga.

